



Army Casualty

Notification and Assistance Guide

Table of Contents

Preface	5
Introduction	7
The Casualty Notification Officer	8
Introduction.	8
The Casualty Assistance Center	8
The Notification Process	9
Casualty Reporting	9
Casualty Notification Officer Qualifications	9
Notification Requirements	10
The Notification Team	10
Who Receives Notification of a Casualty?	10
Preparation for CNO Duty	11
The Notification Visit	12
After the Notification.	15
Self-Care for the CNO	15
Important Contacts and Web Sites	16
Post-Notification Duties	16
The Casualty Assistance Officer	17
Casualty Assistance Officer Mission	17
Casualty Assistance Officer Qualifications	17
Types of Casualty Assistance Officers	18
Who Is Eligible to Receive Assistance?	18
Determining the Primary Next of Kin	18
Phases of CAO Duty	19
Phase I: How Long Is CAO Duty?	19
Preparing for CAO Duty	19
Initial Phone Call	22
The Complexity of Family Relationships	22
The First Visit	23
The Death Gratuity Payment	24
Status of Remains	25
Posthumous Citizenship	25
Authorization for Disclosure of Information Forms	25
After Leaving the Residence	26

Summary of First Visit	26
Phase II: Subsequent Visits	26
Person Authorized to Direct Disposition (PADD)	26
Disposition of Remains (From Theater)	27
Identification and Viewability of the Remains.	27
Disassociated Remains.	28
Disposition Instructions	29
Planning for the Funeral.	30
Military Transport of Remains	30
Escorting of Remains.	31
Planeside Honors	31
Family Funeral Travel	32
Accompanying the Family to the Funeral Home	32
Lapel Buttons	33
Preparing for the Funeral	33
The Funeral	34
Phase III: Post-Funeral Assistance	34
Funeral/Interment Expenses	35
Legal Assistance.	35
Army Emergency Relief	36
Department of Veterans Affairs Benefits	36
Survivor's Benefit Plan (SBP)	37
Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI)	38
Family SGLI.	39
Traumatic Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (TSGLI).	39
Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) and Savings Deposit Program (SDP) Claims	39
Unpaid Pay and Allowances (UPPA)	40
Housing and Transportation	40
TRICARE	41
Social Security Benefits	41
Military ID Card	42
Receiving the Personal Effects.	42
The Heirloom Chest	43
Fatal Training/Operational Accident Brief.	43
Closing out the Case	45
After Action Report	46
CAO Self Care	47

Grief and Bereavement	48
Introduction.	48
The Grief and Bereavement Process	48
Grief Reactions to the Notification	48
The Long-Term Grieving Process.	51
Summary	53
Special Sections	54
Casualty Assistance in DUSTWUN (Duty Status Whereabouts Unknown) Cases	54
Casualty Assistance in Missing Cases	56
Appendix A: Casualty Assistance Officer Checklist	60
Preparation for CAO Duty	60
Initial Contact and Meeting	60
Follow-up Visits	61
The Funeral and Interment Service.	61
Post Funeral Assistance	62
Fatal Training/Operational Accident Presentations to NOK.	62
Appendix B: List of Key Forms	63
Appendix C: Directory of Telephone Numbers—Casualty Assistance.	64
Index	65

Preface

There is nothing more vital to our Warrior Ethos than honoring the sacrifice of those fellow Soldiers who have died in service to our Nation. And there is no greater way to render that honor than by helping a Soldier's Family or loved ones in the aftermath of their loss. Just as we will never leave a fallen comrade behind on the battlefield, we will always do our utmost to assist the families of our fallen comrades in their time of need.

As a Casualty Notification Officer (CNO) or a Casualty Assistance Officer (CAO), you have the honor and duty to assist the Family of someone who has paid the highest price in defense of our Nation. As such, you represent the Secretary of the Army, and our Army itself. Our Army has a covenant with those fallen Soldiers and their families, and we take great pride in keeping faith with that covenant. Keep in mind that your performance as a CNO or CAO is likely to shape the Family's lasting impression of our Army as an institution that cares for its own. This duty is among the most profound responsibilities we can take on as Soldiers, and for that reason—at every step—you will have available all the resources the Army has to offer to help you carry out this solemn mission.

This Guide is a primary resource for assisting an Army Family, from the time they receive news of the loss of their loved one until they have received all assistance entitled to them after the loss of their loved one. Whether you will be performing CNO or CAO duties—or both—be ready to assume this vital mission as soon as you are placed on the roster. Become familiar with the contents of this Guide and its associated training program immediately so that you are well prepared when selected to assist an Army Family.

As noted in this Guide, CNOs and CAOs will have priority access to all available Army resources at the local level as they carry out their mission. And, if required, the Army's Casualty and Mortuary Affairs Operations Center will assist you with special needs that cannot be met at the local level.

As Americans, we all wish to honor the memory of those Soldiers who gave their lives for our country, and to help their families in their time of grief. You have the unique opportunity to do both through your service as a CNO or CAO.

Introduction

This Guide provides a comprehensive description of Casualty Notification Officer (CNO) and Casualty Assistance Officer (CAO) duties. It describes the requirements of these duties and how to carry them out. Specifically, this Guide will help you to:

- Assume the roles, functions, and responsibilities of CNOs and/or CAOs;
- Respond flexibly to the variety of challenges that may arise—to “expect the unexpected;”
- Take care of the “hearts of the next of kin,” by stressing empathy and understanding the emotional issues involved in grief and bereavement.

In addition to the CNO and CAO sections of this Guide, a third section focuses specifically on Grief and Bereavement. This module introduces the grief process, describes how people react to the news of the loss of a loved one, and provides guidance in offering support to the families you will be helping.

Also included in this Guide are resources for additional information. Use these tools. Throughout the process, your most important resource is your Casualty Assistance Center (CAC), which is staffed by experienced professionals. If you’re uncertain about any aspect of your CNO or CAO duty, please contact your CAC.

And remember, one of the most important tools you have is your sense of Army professionalism and discipline. Treat the Family you are serving as you would want *your* Family to be served in the same situation.

The Casualty Notification Officer

What Is a Casualty?

- Beleaguered
- Besieged
- Captured
- Deceased
- Detained
- DUSTWUN (Duty Status Whereabouts Unknown)
- Injured
- Ill
- Interned
- Missing
- Missing in Action

INTRODUCTION

The primary goal of casualty notification is to notify the Next of Kin (NOK) of Soldiers who have fallen in battle, have died due to other causes, or have become missing. This section of the Guide describes the roles, functions, and responsibilities of a Casualty Notification Officer. It covers the following key topics:

- How casualties are reported;
- The roles and responsibilities of the Casualty Notification Officer;
- Preparing for the notification;
- Delivering the notification;
- Understanding and responding to the grief reactions of the NOK;
- Reporting the completion of the notification to the Casualty Assistance Center (CAC) and briefing the Casualty Assistance Officer (CAO) assigned to the NOK; and
- Understanding the personal impact of the notification duty on the CNO and the need for self-care.

THE CASUALTY ASSISTANCE CENTER

Casualties are reported by/through the Casualty Assistance Center (CAC) closest to the place where the incident occurred. The CAC located closest to the Soldier's home base will also provide continuous support to everyone involved in the casualty assistance process. CACs accomplish the administrative functions of casualty operations and mortuary affairs, the key subcomponents of the Army Casualty Program. They account for, report, and document all reportable casualties. A CAC is typically located at a military installation and manages the local casualty and mortuary processes.

CAC Responsibilities

A CAC's responsibilities include the following:

- In a non-Theater casualty, collecting and

verifying personal information related to the deceased Soldier;

- Preparing and submitting the initial Casualty Report to the Casualty and Mortuary Affairs Operations Center (CMAOC);
- Assigning a team—CNO and chaplain—to notify the NOK;
- Coordinating all notification actions with the CMAOC;
- Coordinating mortuary affairs (transport and preparation of the body);
- Coordinating and arranging Military Funeral Honors (MFH); and
- Appointing and guiding a CAO to support the survivors through the funeral, and the benefits and entitlements processes. (AR 600-8-1, 2-12)¹

When a Soldier dies, CMAOC notifies all concerned CACs, including the Soldier's home station CAC and any supporting CACs that may need to provide assistance to Family members located in those areas. These CACs communicate and coordinate activities among each other, depending on the requirements of the specific case. CMAOC also monitors the overall notification and assistance process and supervises all CAC activities.

Your CAC has trained personnel to provide you with support. In turn, you must work closely with your CAC, throughout your duty as a CNO.

Casualty Assistance Center Locations

The Army has 27 CACs in the continental United States (CONUS) and six additional CACs located overseas. Currently, the Army has one Casualty Area Command, which is located in Kuwait. The Kuwait Casualty Area Command, also known as the Theater CAC, is responsible

¹ This is a reference to Army Regulation 600-8-1 Army Casualty Program. Throughout this Guide, appropriate references to AR-600-8-1 and other relevant regulations will be included.

for all casualties that occur in both Iraq and Afghanistan, and any other country within the Army Central Command's (CENTCOM) Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)/Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) contingency footprint.

THE NOTIFICATION PROCESS

When a Soldier becomes a casualty, no matter where, the CAC located in the geographical area where the incident occurred can receive the information from any one of the following sources:

- The Unit Commander/Representative in Theater;
- Police (civilian/military);
- Medical treatment facility;
- Another CAC; or
- The Soldier's relative.

For an in-Theater death, the information will usually come through personnel channels, such as Brigade S-1, Division or Corps G1 level, to the Theater CAC. The Theater Casualty Area Command will complete an initial casualty report and forward it to the CMAOC. (AR 600-8-1, Chapter 4)

CASUALTY REPORTING

What Is a Casualty?

A casualty is any person who is lost to an organization by reason of having been declared:

- Beleaguered
- Besieged
- Captured
- Deceased
- Detained
- DUSTWUN (Duty Status Whereabouts Unknown)
- Injured
- Ill
- Interned
- Missing
- Missing in Action

A casualty does not always mean death. It is possible that you may be called upon to notify someone about a Soldier who has not died but suffered one of the non-death casualties

listed above. You will not be responsible for determining the casualty category. Also, not all of the above categories require in-person notification. The CAC will brief you on your mission in detail.

Who Is Reportable?

Based on this definition of a casualty, the Army reports the following categories of casualties:

- Active Duty military, mobilized Army National Guard, or Army Reserve;
- Reserve or National Guard Soldiers enroute to or from, or participating in an authorized training activity as outlined in Army Regulation 600-8-1;
- Army retirees;
- Soldiers separated from the Army within 120 days;
- Army civilian employees outside the U.S. or on travel in the U.S.;
- Soldiers in "Absent without Leave" (AWOL) status;
- All Army dependents;
- Army contractors in a deployed theater of operation; and
- Medal of Honor recipients. (AR 600-8-1; 3-1)

CASUALTY NOTIFICATION OFFICER QUALIFICATIONS

A CNO must be, whenever possible:

- An Officer—Captain or higher;
- A Warrant Officer—CW2 or higher;
- If Enlisted—Sergeant First Class (SFC) or higher;
- Equal or higher in grade to the casualty and to the Primary Next of Kin (PNOK), if the PNOK is a member of the military;
- Trained and certified in the responsibilities of CNO duty. (AR 600-8-1, 5-5)

A basic reason for the rank requirement is to select candidates with the requisite experience and maturity to perform the duty.

If the PNOK is also a member of the military, but his or her rank is not known prior to notification, the rank of the CNO must be equal to or higher than that of the deceased. Once the CNO completes the notification and learns the rank of the PNOK, this information must be immediately passed back to the CAC. The CAC will then ensure that the CAO's rank is equal to or higher than that of the PNOK.

QUESTION

When a Soldier dies while at home on leave, how does the information get into the casualty channels?

ANSWER

The Soldier's Family can contact the Soldier's unit or the nearest military installation. In some cases, the civilian law enforcement or medical personnel locates a military identification card at the scene and contacts the nearest military installation.

QUESTION

Why are AWOL Soldiers reportable casualties?

ANSWER

They have not been dropped from the rolls.

QUESTION

Why are Army Dependents reportable?

ANSWER

Because they may be beneficiaries of the Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (FSGLI), and mortuary benefits.

QUESTION

Who is considered an Army dependent for purposes of casualty reporting?

ANSWER

All Family members of active duty personnel who are eligible to hold a military ID card; Family members of retired personnel who die in a Medical Treatment Facility (MTF) (Army or military hospital) within the United States.

NOTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

Notification within Four Hours

The notification must be completed within four hours from the time the CAC received the initial casualty report. Sometimes, notification cannot be completed within four hours—the residence of the NOK may be far from the CNO's location or the NOK may not be home. In these situations, the CAC will report the status of the notification to CMAOC.

Notification between 0600 and 2200

Notification must be made between the hours of 0600 and 2200. Again, there are exceptions:

- The NOK may learn of the death through media channels.
- The NOK leaves for work before 0600 hours. For example, if you arrive at the residence prior to 0600 and you notice lights on and activity in the residence, then contact the CAC, explain the situation, and ask for further guidance.
- The Soldier's death was part of a multiple casualty incident and all other families have been notified.

Any exceptions must be approved and coordinated with CMAOC.

Class A Uniform

Report to the CAC in your Class A uniform within one hour of receiving the call from the CAC. Once you are assigned to the roster of potential CNOs, make sure your Class A uniform is always ready.

THE NOTIFICATION TEAM

The Casualty Notification Team is comprised of a CNO, who is appointed by the CAC, and a chaplain (SSG or above if a chaplain is not available).

As the CNO, you represent the Secretary of the Army; you notify the NOK and provide whatever support is necessary during the notification meeting. The chaplain is there to provide support to both the NOK and to the CNO.

There are several advantages to the two-person notification team. You are able to rehearse the notification script while the chaplain is driving. The chaplain can offer you support and

guidance. Finally, the two-person team presents a united Army front at the NOK's residence.

WHO RECEIVES NOTIFICATION OF A CASUALTY?

You will be responsible for notifying the **Primary Next of Kin (PNOK)** and **Secondary Next of Kin (SNOK)** (if located within close proximity to the PNOK). The PNOK is the person most closely related to the casualty for the purpose of notification and assistance. This is usually the spouse for married Soldiers and the parents for unmarried Soldiers. Even if the spouse is a minor, he or she can be the PNOK. The SNOK is any NOK other than the PNOK. For example, if the PNOK is the wife, the parents are the SNOK. ***The PNOK will be notified before the SNOK whenever possible.***

Order of Precedence to Determine Primary Next of Kin

The Army has established an order of precedence to identify the primary next of kin:

- Spouse (if married, even if a minor);
- Natural, adopted, and illegitimate children;
- Eldest parent, or parent with custody of the Soldier;
- Persons standing in loco parentis (A person who assumes parental rights and duties for a minor for at least one year immediately prior to the Soldier joining the Army);
- Persons granted legal custody of the individual by a court decree or statutory provision;
- Brothers or sisters, to include half-blood and those acquired through adoption;
- Grandparents;
- Other relatives in order of relationship to the individual according to the laws of the deceased's state of domicile. (AR 600-8-1, 5-1)

If no other persons are available, the Secretary of the Army may be deemed to act on behalf of the individual.

Single Soldier with No Dependents For a single Soldier with no dependents, parents will be notified first. If the parents are not living together, notification of both parents is launched simultaneously. The eldest parent will be designated the PNOK when the parents

are divorced or separated, unless one parent was granted legal custody of the Soldier.

Minor Children Minor children are not notified directly, except with express permission from their guardian. Minor children's rights are exercised by their parents or legal guardian.

Secondary Next of Kin The line of succession used to determine the SNOK is the same line of succession as above. An example of a SNOK would be the parents of a deceased Soldier who has a surviving spouse or the younger parent of a deceased Soldier without a surviving spouse or child.

DD Form 93 and SGLV Form 8286

You, or another CNO, will also notify any other person or persons listed on **DD Form 93—the Record of Emergency Data**, and **SGLV Form 8286—the Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance Election and Certificate**.

Any persons listed as “do not notify” on the Soldier's **DD Form 93** will not be notified.

“Do Not Notify Due to Ill Health” notification will be made to the person listed on DD 93, Block 8b, as “Notify Instead.” Once that notification is made, the person notified is then responsible for notifying, if possible, the person listed as “Do not notify.” In certain circumstances, that person may be under a physician's care. In these instances, the physician determines if and when the person should be notified. The CAC will follow up with the person notified to ensure notification by that person has been completed. **Ultimately, the CAC will tell you whom to notify and the order in which they should be notified.**

PREPARATION FOR CNO DUTY

Before You Get the Call

The first step in effective CNO duty is effective preparation. As soon as you receive CNO training, you are placed on a standby roster. Begin your preparation for CNO duty by reviewing the CNO procedures contained in this Guide and those in Army Regulation 600-8-1, Chapter 5.

View the CNO Web site to re-familiarize yourself with your responsibilities

RECORD OF EMERGENCY DATA	
PRIVACY ACT STATEMENT	
AUTHORITY: 10 USC 1475 to 1480 and 2771, 38 USC 1970, 44 USC 3101, and EO 9397, November 1943 (SSN).	
PRINCIPAL PURPOSES: This form is used to designate beneficiaries for certain benefits in the event of the servicemember's death. It is a guide for the disposition of that member's pay and allowances if captured, missing or interned. It also shows names and addresses of the person(s) the servicemember desires to be notified in case of emergency or death. The purpose of soliciting the SSN is to provide positive identification.	
ROUTINE USES: None.	
DISCLOSURE: Voluntary, however, failure to provide personal identifier information may delay notification of the servicemember's status or may handicap processing of benefits to designated beneficiaries.	
INSTRUCTIONS TO SERVICEMEMBER	
This extremely important form is to be used by you to show the names and addresses of your spouse, children, parents, and any other person(s) you would like notified if you become a casualty, and, to designate beneficiaries for certain benefits if you die. IT IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY to complete this form.	statement carefully, and sign on the line provided: I fully understand this statement.

DD Form 93

(<https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/active/tagd/cmaoc/cmaoc.htm>).

Access the audio on-demand refresher training by telephone (1-877-266-3030), or Internet: https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/protect/active/tagd/cmaoc/cnolao/cnolao_index.html

Another good resource is the S1 Net. The S1 Net is an online forum designed to disseminate personnel-related policies throughout the Army, including useful information for CNOs and CAOs. It also includes an interactive forum, where CAOs and CNOs can share information and correspond with key leaders at CMAOC. All resources on the S1 NET require AKO access. The S1 Net can be found at:

<https://forums.bcks.army.mil/CommunityBrowser.aspx?id=218735>

As mentioned above, make sure your Class A uniform is always ready. Once you receive the call, you only have one hour to report to the CAC in the correct uniform, ready to assume your role as a CNO.

Meet with the Chaplain

Meet the chaplain assigned to accompany you and ask any questions you may have. The chaplain may have participated in notifications before and be able to provide you with valuable insights.

Pre-Notification Briefing

The CAC will brief you on the case and provide you with the following documents:

- **Appointment Orders** This local memorandum assigns you to CNO duty.
- **DD Form 93 (Record of Emergency Data)** Review the Soldier's **DD Form 93** to understand the makeup of the deceased Family structure.

Please read the instructions before completing this form.

Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance Election and Certificate

Use this form to: (check all that apply)
☐ Name or update your beneficiary
☐ Reduce the amount of your insurance coverage
☐ Decline insurance coverage

Important: This form is for use by Active Duty and Reserve members. This form does not apply to and cannot be used for any other Government Life Insurance.

Last name	First name	Middle name	Rank, title or grade	Social Security Number
Branch of Service (Do not abbreviate)			Current Duty Location	

Amount of Insurance
 By law, you are automatically insured for \$400,000. If you want \$400,000 of insurance, skip to Beneficiary(ies) and Payment Option. If you want less than \$400,000 of insurance, please check the appropriate block below and write the amount desired and your Coverage is available in increments of \$50,000. If you do not want any insurance, check the appropriate block below and write own handwriting), "I do not want insurance at this time."

☐ Declining SGLI coverage also cancels all family coverage and traumatic injury benefit.

☐ I want coverage in the amount of \$

SGLV 8286

- **Casualty Report** The CAC will review the casualty report with you; you will learn the NOK's name, relationship to the deceased, their address, the circumstances of the incident, and what to say and what not to say.
- **Map to the Residence** The CAC will prepare a map to the NOK's residence for you. This could be as simple as using an Internet site such as Mapquest.
- **Record of Notification Actions Form** The CAC will provide you a **Record of Notification Actions** form to be completed after the notification. This form must be returned to the CAC as soon as possible.

The CAC will also provide phone numbers for local emergency response agencies:

- Police department
- Local hospital and ambulance service
- Local fire department rescue squad.

If the NOK lives outside the local area, use the phone book or the Internet to determine the phone numbers of the above agencies in the area where you'll be making the notification.

Preparing for the Presence of the Media

Be prepared for the possible presence of the news media at the NOK's home. The basic policy is to avoid talking to the media. Refer them to the local Public Affairs Office (PAO) or the Army Human Resources Command PAO (703-325-8856). (For further guidance on dealing with the media, see p. 23.)

Police Escorts

If you believe that the area you have been asked to enter is unsafe, you can request a police escort from the local police. Use the police only when absolutely necessary, to

avoid unnecessary commotion and attracting unwarranted attention to the Family. This can lead to a breakdown in the notification process. For example, a neighbor could call the NOK and notify them before you are able to do so.

In any case, do not request a police escort unless you get permission from the CAC.

The Casualty Report

As mentioned above, the casualty report is a critical document. Do not take it inside the residence. If you do, the NOK will want to see what you are reading or referring to. Learn and memorize, if possible, all of the information in the casualty report.

Remember, you can only relay information approved by the CAC. You may not have all the information about the death at the time of notification. If the Family presses for more, do not be tempted to speculate. Stick to the facts. This is especially important when multiple NOK are being notified by multiple CNOs. All NOK must receive the same information.

THE NOTIFICATION VISIT

Enroute to the Residence

Use your time enroute to the residence wisely. Talk to the chaplain to help you calm down, if you're nervous. Listen to the on-demand audio refresher training. Look over your notes and rehearse what you're going to say.

Locating the Next of Kin

Your goal as you arrive at the NOK's location is to make the visit as inconspicuous as possible; you want to avoid calling undue attention to the presence of the military.

If the Next of Kin Is Not Home

If you arrive at the residence and the Family is not at home, call the CAC for instructions. **Do not leave the area.**

The CAC may ask you to approach neighbors to find out where the NOK is or when he/she will be home. If you talk to neighbors, do not divulge any information other than you are from the Army and have an important message for the NOK.

If you find out that the NOK will be coming

home soon, wait until he or she arrives. But do not remain parked in front of their residence. Park the vehicle in a suitable area nearby.

If neighbors do not know where the NOK is, the CAC may send you to the post office, to determine whether the NOK's mail has been forwarded, placed on hold, or stopped and/or when they are expected to return.

As a last resort, you may have to go to the police station to request assistance in locating the NOK. This is usually the case when you have the wrong address.

If contact with NOK has not been established as the four-hour notification deadline approaches, call the CAC for further guidance.

Notifying the Next of Kin at their Place of Employment

If you find out that the NOK is at work, determine the location of the workplace and the NOK's probable arrival home. The Army prefers not to notify NOK at work unless absolutely necessary. If the CAC authorizes you to notify the NOK at their place of employment, ask to speak to their supervisor when you arrive. Explain to the supervisor that you have some important information to relay to the NOK and ask for a private office or similar location to deliver the notification.

Delivering the Notification

When the NOK is at home, you are ready to make the notification. Remember to turn off your cell phone and other electronic devices. Remember—do not take the casualty report into the residence.

At the door:

- Always identify yourself by name, rank, and duty station, e.g., "I am Captain Sam Robinson from Fort Lewis, Washington, and this is Chaplain Smith."
- Ensure you are speaking to the correct person, e.g., "Are you Mr. Tommy L. Jones, the father of Sergeant Robert L. Jones?"
- State that you have an important message to deliver and ask permission to enter the residence, e.g., "I have an important message to deliver from the Secretary of the Army. May we come in, Mr. Jones?"

If at all possible, avoid making the notification outside the residence. Always ask to enter the residence. If the NOK asks you to produce identification, do so without hesitation.

When you're inside and seated, deliver the notification. Make eye contact, express sympathy, and convey warmth and compassion. Be as natural as possible when delivering the notification. Do not allow the notification to come across as a well-rehearsed speech.

Know your script. The CAC will tell you exactly what you can and cannot say. The more you memorize, the better off you'll be.

Do not hurry. Pace your delivery. Take time to pause. Deliver the information in small portions—this will make the notification easier to deliver and easier for the NOK to understand. Allow the person you are notifying enough time to process what you are saying. If you sense that the person you are notifying is not hearing you or is not processing the information, then pause and give the person time to recover or refocus before continuing.

Try to maintain a compassionate manner without using overly sympathetic gestures. Refrain from touching the NOK unless in an effort to ensure their safety. For example, if the NOK faints, catch them.

Remember, you don't know what to expect when making the notification. Your mere appearance and uniform may send the NOK into a panic. Be prepared for this to happen. (Refer to the section on Grief and Bereavement for information about how NOK react to notifications.)

Responding to Questions

The NOK will likely ask you many questions. Provide only the facts contained in the casualty report. Do not reveal any unauthorized information or offer any speculations. You may be tempted to provide information beyond what has been confirmed and authorized, to ease the NOK's anxiety and grief. Resist this temptation. If you are pressed for more information, assure the NOK that they will receive more information, as soon as it becomes available.

Do not provide opinions, personal experiences, or conjectures. Do not discuss matters you are

Pre-Notification Briefing

CAC will provide you with these documents:

- ☐ Appointment Orders
- ☐ DD Form 93
- ☐ Casualty Report
- ☐ Map to the Residence
- ☐ Record of Notification Actions Form

Notification Tips

- Do not take Casualty Report into residence
- If possible, avoid making notification outside the residence
- Be natural; convey warmth and compassion
- Know your script
- Do not hurry

not qualified to discuss. It's okay to say "I don't know," but always follow-up with, "I will see that you get an answer."

Use good judgment by not revealing gory or embarrassing details.

Never discuss questions relating to errors of judgment, or line of duty, or the responsibility of other personnel concerned with the casualty incident.

You want to make sure that all NOK receive the same facts about the casualty incident. This is especially important in multiple casualty incidents. It's common for the NOK in a multiple casualty incident to compare notes with each other. Assistance to the NOK is easier when everyone is working together.

If the incident is under investigation, let the NOK know that when the investigation is completed, additional confirmed information will be provided.

Do not discuss entitlements for death cases at this time. If asked, advise the NOK that a CAO will be assigned to discuss such matters.

Do not discuss the disposition of remains or the return of personal effects at this time.

Always note questions in your Daily Log and remember to follow-up with the CAC for answers if and when they become available.

Grief Reactions—What to Expect

The notification will provoke a grief reaction of some type: shock, disbelief, confusion, numbness, anger, guilt, and even panic and other intense emotions.

Expect any combination of these reactions. A person in shock and disbelief may be unable to process any information you provide them...or be able to give you only the simplest information. Some NOK may react in anger and direct his or her feelings toward you, perhaps because you represent the Army.

Remember—these emotions and reactions are part of the grieving process.

However, if the situation becomes volatile—if anger, for example, takes the form of physical threats or abuse—remove yourself from the

situation and immediately contact the CAC. For effective ways to react to grief, refer to the Grief and Bereavement section of this Guide.

Gathering Information

If the NOK is able to answer questions, gather the following information:

- **NOK's expected address for the next 45 days** This includes both the mailing and the physical address, to ensure proper delivery of correspondence. All time-sensitive contact with the NOK will be made using this address. If you can't get a confirmed address, report this to the CAC. Confirmed 45-day addresses are sometimes difficult to get from spouses. Don't press the issue. But at least verify whether the NOK will remain at the residence until contacted by the CAO.
- **NOK's professional title** If the NOK is a current or retired member of any of the military branches of service, obtain their rank and service;
- **NOK's telephone contact information;**
- **Other information** necessary to complete the Record of Casualty Notification Actions, if possible.

If the primary NOK is the PADD (Person Authorized to Direct Disposition of Remains), encourage them not to make funeral arrangements until after speaking with the CAO.

You don't want to turn your notification into an interrogation, however. Judge whether the NOK is able to provide the above information. Your goal is to complete the notification without causing unnecessary harm to the NOK.

Non-Theater Deaths

Not all deaths occur in a theater of operations. Many Soldiers are killed or die, for a variety of reasons, while in the continental United States or other overseas locations. In cases where the Soldier dies while at home on leave, it is very possible and likely that the Family will know about the death before the Army learns of it. If this is the case, advise the NOK not to make any funeral arrangements until they have spoken to their CAO because the Army provides funeral benefits that the Family can lose if they make arrangements on their own.

Gathering Documentation

If the NOK is calm enough to carry on a logical conversation, ask the NOK to begin gathering documentation such as their marriage license, divorce decree(s), birth certificates, and so on before you leave the residence. These documents will be needed later in the casualty assistance process and are discussed in more detail in the Casualty Assistance Officer section of this Guide.

When to Leave

When you complete the notification, you must determine an appropriate time to leave. There is no set rule. You'll sense when the time comes to leave. But you should not be in a hurry to do so. The NOK should not be left alone. Ask if you can call a neighbor, relative, friend, or clergy.

Inform the NOK that the CAO will contact him or her within a few hours. If the notification occurred close to 2200 hours, determine from the NOK an appropriate time the following morning when the CAO can contact them, and then notify the CAC.

Make sure to leave phone numbers with the NOK before you leave—the number for your CAC and the CMAOC toll-free number (800-626-3317).

AFTER THE NOTIFICATION

As soon as you complete the notification, contact your CAC. Other notifications, such as to the SNOK, could depend on the completion of your notification. Often, the CNO for the SNOK is waiting for you to finish notifying the PNOK before they can notify the SNOK. When you contact the CAC, provide them with the following information:

- Time of notification;
- 45-day address (mailing and physical);
- NOK telephone number(s);
- NOK's preferred name and rank if applicable;
- Any unusual events or comments by the NOK.

Unusual comments may include those indicating a potential for self-harm, such as the following:

- "I have no reason to live now."
- "I wish I could just get in my car and never stop driving."

- "The Army should be punished for killing my loved one."

Such comments may indicate the need for immediate medical or psychological help.

SELF-CARE FOR THE CNO

Remember—perhaps the hardest duty in the Army is notification. Invariably, the experience will take an emotional toll on you. Talk to your spouse, a friend, CAC personnel, or a chaplain—don't let things build up inside you.

Don't hesitate to contact a professional if you need assistance in the days and weeks that follow the notification. Available resources include the following:

- Military OneSource – provides a referral to in-person counseling from a licensed professional counselor in the local community for six sessions per issue at no cost for a service member or eligible Family member. Contacts include the following:
 - 800-342-9647
 - <http://www.militaryonesource.com/skins/MOS/home.aspx>
- Local chaplain
- Local installation resources.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS AND WEB SITES

CMAOC Web Site	https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/active/TAGD/CMAOC/cmaoc.htm
Military OneSource	http://www.militaryonesource.com/skins/MOS/home.aspx
S1 Net	https://forums.bcks.army.mil/CommunityBrowser.aspx?id=218735
CNO Refresher Site	https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/protect/Active/TAGD/CMAOC/CNOCAO/CNOCAO_Index.html
Long Term Family Case Management	https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/active/tagd/cmaoc/altfcm/index.htm
Army Families Online <i>Survivor Homepage</i>	http://armyfamiliesonline.org (On this page, click on "Our Survivors," which will take you to the Survivors Home Page.)

POST-NOTIFICATION DUTIES

Your particular CAC will inform you of local CAC procedures after the notification is completed. These include the following:

- How often the CAC wants to be updated by phone;
- How long after the notification the CAC wants the Record of Notification Actions turned in;
- When and how the CAC wants you to brief the CAO assigned to the case.

Depending upon your CAC's specific procedures, you may be required either to call the CAC or to report there in person.

It's likely that your CAC will want you to submit the Record of Notification Actions as soon as possible. This document can also be used when de-briefing the CAO. Issues that will be important to the CAO include language barriers, hostility toward the Army, mental state of the NOK, and so on.

The Casualty Assistance Officer

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE OFFICER MISSION

A Casualty Assistance Officer (CAO) helps eligible NOK with various matters after they have been notified of the loss of a loved one. These include:

- Assisting with arrangements for the funeral/memorial/interment service;
- Assisting the NOK in applying for and receiving benefits and entitlements;
- Assisting in the delivery of the personal effects to the person eligible to receive them;
- Keeping the NOK informed regarding the status of any ongoing investigations and assisting them to obtain copies of final investigation reports;
- Assisting the NOK in resolving other personal matters; and
- Providing other needed support to the Family. (AR 600-8-1, 6-1)

Most of your time will be spent helping the Family with funeral arrangements, applying for benefits, securing the Soldier's personal effects, and other matters.



Note: Your role is to **assist** the NOK to make arrangements, not to actually make arrangements yourself. The difference is that if you make the arrangements, you might be obligating the NOK to assume some funeral and interment expenses that the Army will not cover.

Remember, however, that there's more to the duty than filling out paperwork; you are there to assist the Family during the time of their greatest need. Therefore, your most important duty is to just be there for them. During your CAO duty, the Family should be able to reach you at all times, and you should respond to the Family's requests as soon as possible.

Treat the Family with respect, honor and caring; give them your full attention and dedication. The NOK and his or her Family's lasting impression of the Army will be based on the service you provide. Your duty is to demonstrate the essence of Army professionalism, and the degree of your professionalism will reflect on you and on the Army.

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE OFFICER QUALIFICATIONS

To qualify for duty, a CAO:

- Must be an Officer (Captain or above), Chief Warrant Officer Two or higher, or senior noncommissioned officer, sergeant first class or higher;
- Must be equal in rank or higher than the casualty and/or the PNOK, when the PNOK is also a Soldier or retired servicemember from any branch of military service; and
- Cannot be a relative or close personal friend of the Family; and
- Available for full-time CAO duty. (AR 600-8-1, 6-3)

The prohibition against assigning a relative or close personal friend to be a CAO is important. This is designed to prevent a CAO's relationship with the Family from overriding their responsibilities to the Army. A CAO who is also a friend or relative may make promises that the Army cannot and should not fulfill. In addition, friends and relatives should be providing support to the NOK as well as mourning the loss themselves.

The CAO should also be of similar military or professional background to the deceased, especially when the death is mission or training-related.

Exceptions to Qualifications

Exceptions to the above qualifications are

A Casualty Assistance Officer helps eligible NOK with various matters after they have been notified of the loss of a loved one.

Types of CAOs

- Primary
- Interment
- Travel
- SNOK
- PADD

handled on a case-by-case basis by CMAOC. If, for example, a Soldier is a First Lieutenant or a Warrant Officer, with previous experience as an NCO, the exception to the official policy will more than likely be approved.

TYPES OF CASUALTY ASSISTANCE OFFICERS

There may be more than one CAO assigned to a particular case. Situations where multiple CAOs are assigned include the following:

- The funeral/memorial service takes place outside the geographical area of the primary CAC;
- The Family moves to another area;
- The Family requests a new CAO;
- CAOs are assigned for other NOK, such as the SNOK; or
- The primary CAO leaves the Army or has extended TDY.

CAO duties may take many forms to include the following:

- **Primary** – Appointed to assist the PNOK through all phases of casualty assistance;
- **Interment** – When interment and memorial services are held in another geographic area, another CAO will assist in the preparation and coordination of the services and the needs of the NOK during their stay at that location;
- **Travel** – Assists Family members living in areas outside the primary CAO's area of responsibility to arrange travel and settle claims for memorial/interment services;
- **SNOK** – A CAO may be assigned to the SNOK, usually the parents; and
- **PADD** – The Person Authorized to Direct Disposition of the Remains of the Soldier (PADD) is assigned a CAO if that person is neither the PNOK nor the SNOK.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE ASSISTANCE?

The following categories of Soldiers will receive CAO assistance:

- Active Duty military, mobilized Army National Guard or Army Reserve Soldiers on orders;*
- Soldiers enroute to or from an authorized training activity;
- Retirees: General Officers, Sergeant Major

of the Army, retired Soldiers collecting retired pay;

- Soldiers separated within 120 days;
- Soldiers Absent Without Leave (AWOL); and
- Department of the Army civilian employees who are assigned, deployed or TDY OCONUS or those TDY CONUS. For this purpose, Alaska and Hawaii are considered OCONUS. (AR 600-8-1, 6-2) Assistance will be coordinated with the Army Benefits Center for federal civilian employees.

The survivors of contractors are not eligible. The Army will help with notification, but the contractor's employer provides assistance with their respective benefits.

DETERMINING THE PRIMARY NEXT OF KIN

You will be responsible for assisting the **PNOK** and the **SNOK**. The PNOK is the person most closely related to the casualty for the purpose of notification and assistance. This is usually the spouse for married persons and the parents for unmarried Soldiers. Children are considered PNOK along with the spouse.

Even if the spouse is a minor, he or she can be the PNOK.

The SNOK is any NOK other than the PNOK. For example, if the PNOK is the wife, the parents are the SNOK.

Order of Precedence to Determine the Primary Next of Kin

The Army has established an order of precedence to identify the PNOK:

- Spouse, even if a minor;
- Natural, adopted, and illegitimate children;
- Eldest parent, unless legal exclusive (sole) custody was granted to a person by a court decree or statutory provision;
- Persons standing *in loco parentis* (person who assumes parental rights and duties for a minor for at least one year);
- Persons granted legal custody of the individual by a court decree or statutory provision;
- Brothers or sisters, to include half-blood and those acquired through adoption;
- Grandparents;
- Other relatives in order of relationship to the

individual according to civil laws; or

- If no other persons are available, the Secretary of the Army will act on behalf of the individual.

PHASES OF CAO DUTY

Your CAO duty falls into three basic phases:

- PHASE I – Assignment as CAO through the end of the first visit. This includes, among other tasks:
 - Verification of information;
 - Death Gratuity payment;
- PHASE II – Subsequent visits through the Funeral and/or Memorial Service:
 - Return of remains, including Planeside Honors;
 - Funeral planning;
 - Assisting Family during the funeral/memorial.
- PHASE III - Post-Funeral Assistance:
 - Assisting Family in applying for benefits;
 - Return of personal effects;
 - Request for official reports;
 - Fatal Training and Operational Brief.

Throughout these three phases you will be working closely with your CAC and also with a case manager from CMAOC assigned to assist you. You will receive an introductory e-mail from the case manager after you have been appointed.

PHASE I: HOW LONG IS CAO DUTY?

The length of your assignment as a CAO will vary depending largely on the circumstances of the case and the number of CAOs assigned to the case. Duty length also varies by case. It can range from a single visit (e.g., a retiree death) to more than a year for an Active Duty death, or when a fatal training operational briefing is required.

Whether you provide all assistance to the NOK, or you are a link in a chain of CAOs assisting that NOK, you'll work closely with your CAC throughout this process. The CAC staff will be your best resource.

Communication with your CAC and the CMAOC case manager is vital, as is communication and coordination between you and other CAOs who may be assigned to the

same case.

At the end of your duty, you will complete an After Action Report so that important information can be maintained at your CAC or be passed along to another CAO, if necessary. There may be times when you will be called back to provide additional assistance.

Your CAO duty is complete when:

- All applicable benefit forms have been filed and benefits have begun to flow to the NOK; or
- When another CAO, for any reason, takes over.

Your CAC will notify you when your duty is complete, based on discussions with you and the NOK. Remember, you are there to assist the NOK no matter how long it takes.

PREPARING FOR CAO DUTY

When you are added to the duty roster for possible CAO duty, begin your preparation by doing the following:

- Review relevant regulations:
 - Chapter 6 of Army Regulation 600-8-1 – Army Casualty Program (http://www.army.mil/usapa/epubs/pdf/r600_8_1.pdf)
 - DA Pamphlet 638-2 Care and Disposition of Remains and Disposition of Personal Effects (http://www.army.mil/usapa/epubs/pdf/p638_2.pdf)
- Review the online CAO training and Grief and Bereavement modules, available at: <https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/protect/Active/TAGD/CMAOC/CNOCAO/castrain/Index.html>.

Upon certification as a CAO, inform the unit S3 of any possible conflicts, such as:

- Upcoming TDY/official travel;
- Duty roster and detail assignments;
- Field exercises;
- Scheduled service schools;
- Approved leaves;
- Upcoming Permanent Change of Station (PCS);
- Approved retirement or separation dates; or
- Outside employment obligations.

When you are assigned to CAO duty, it becomes your primary mission. It takes precedence over all of the above duties. You will be released from all conflicting duties or requirements so that you can provide all possible meaningful assistance to the NOK.

Regarding approved leave, CAC personnel will let you know if you need to be replaced or not. The replacement, if necessary, will be coordinated through the unit or installation's tasking authority—usually the S3 or G3.

Getting the Call—Reporting for Duty

Once you receive your initial call to report for duty as a CAO, you will have a lot of questions and concerns. This is to be expected. Remember that your CAC will provide you with continual support and that there is a Family out there that needs your support right now. Focus on getting mentally prepared for duty and reporting to the CAC on time.

Arrive at the CAC or designated location within one hour of receiving the call. Make sure your Class A uniform is always ready to go, so you won't waste time preparing your uniform when and if you are assigned CAO duty.

Research

The first step in CAO duty is to do as much research as you can. There are two types: general research about your CAO duty, and specific research about your particular case.

General Research

At the CAC, review this Guide, the related online training course on the CMAOC Web site, the QuickGuide, and the Guide for Family Members of Fallen Soldiers. Pay special attention to the Grief and Bereavement section of this Guide and the related module on the online training course. All of these resources will assist you in your role as a CAO. If you have not done so, review the key regulations mentioned above.

CAO Resources

This Guide can be found at: <https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/active/tagd/cmaoc/cao/downloads.html>

Another good resource is the S1 Net,

at <https://forums.bcks.army.mil/CommunityBrowser.aspx?id=218735>. This resource contains an interactive forum, where you can exchange issues and concerns with other CAOs and CNOs and correspond with key leaders at CMAOC. All casualty resources are available through the S1 Net.

The Casualty and Mortuary Affairs Operations Center (CMAOC) establishes policy and standards for Army casualty operations. CMAOC is composed of different branches. The most visible to you as a CAO is the Case Management Branch.

The Case Management Branch assigns a Case Manager for every casualty. This person will serve as the overall coordinator and manager for your case including:

- CAO responsibilities and CAC activities
- Disposition of Remains
- Status of the mortuary process
- Status of Personal Effects

The Case Manager will be in regular contact with the CAO and the CAC to check the status of benefits, completion of required forms, and to provide updates on the status of remains.

Family Resources

The Days Ahead Binder The Days Ahead Binder is provided by CMAOC to help the NOK keep track of all the items related to survivor benefits. The binder will be mailed directly to you, so you can give it directly to the PNOK.

The binder contains folders, tabs, and instructions on how to keep the NOK organized. It will help the NOK track benefits applications, paperwork, and appointments. It contains the Survivors Guide to Benefits and the Army Guide for Surviving Family Members.

Become familiar with this binder before giving it to the Family. This will prepare you for questions they have.

Links to important online resources include the following:

- Guide for Family Members: <https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/active/tagd/cmaoc/SurvivorsGuide/index.html>

- A Survivor's Guide to Benefits: <http://www.military.com/benefits/survivor-benefits/survivor-benefit-plan-explained>
- Army Families Online - Survivor Homepage: <http://armyfamiliesonline.org>. (On this page, click on "Our Survivors," which will take you to the Survivors Home Page.)

Case-Specific Research

Next, research your specific case as thoroughly as you can, given the circumstances and the time you have available, by doing the following:

Casualty Report Review the casualty report with the CAC.

Chaplain and CNO Debrief Receive a debrief from the chaplain and the CNO who conducted the notification. Gather information about the nature of the Family and their state of mind and any other information gleaned from the notification visit. Ask about the Family makeup. Are there children from a previous relationship? Are parents or other Family members involved? What about religious, language, and cultural traditions you should be aware of? If this debrief cannot be face-to-face, conduct it by telephone.

CNO's Record of Casualty Notification Actions

Obtain a copy of the CNO's Record of Casualty Notification Actions. Review as much about the circumstances surrounding the casualty incident as possible.

Status of Casualty Verify with the CAC the current status of the casualty and, as appropriate, the status of the remains because this will be one of the first questions you will be asked.

Information from the CAC In addition to the casualty report, the CAC will provide the following information:

- Identification of the PNOK and the SNOK;
- Death Gratuity (DG) recipient;
- Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI) beneficiary;
- The Person Authorized to Direct Disposition of the Soldier's Remains (PADD); and
- The Person Eligible to Receive Effects (PERE).

Remember, these individuals could be the same person or different individuals.

CAO Packet

In addition, the CAC will provide you with a packet of additional forms you must maintain, including the following:

CAO After Action Report – You will be required to complete a CAO After Action Report.

Daily Staff Journal/Duty Officer's Log (DA Form 1594) – You will use this form to keep a log of all visits, discussions, and questions the Family will have throughout your CAO duty and the actions you take.

Your completed *After Action Report*, along with your *DA Form 1594*, will be due to your CAC no later than 60 days after your first visit. If your CAO duties are longer than 60 days, interim reports will be required every 30 days thereafter. This enables the CAC to review the report and determine whether any milestones have not been met or are missing.

Make sure you keep your daily log up to date as you go along, to help you easily track progress and to answer questions that will arise. Since the Family will be grieving, they will often fail to remember requests they might have made, misunderstand actions taken, and so on. Your daily log will be a useful record to help both you and the Family to track progress. Review your log before and after each visit with the NOK, to ensure all questions are answered in a timely manner.

Casualty Assistance Referral Card The CAC will provide you with a Casualty Assistance Referral Card to give to the NOK. It will include the 24-hour hotline contact number for CMAOC

DAILY STAFF JOURNAL OR DUTY OFFICER'S LOG				
For use of this form, see AR 220-15: the proponent agency is Office of The Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations & Plans				
ORGANIZATION OR INSTALLATION		LOCATION		FROM
				HOUR
ITEM NO.	TIME		INCIDENTS, MESSAGES, ORDERS, ETC.	
	IN	OUT		

DA Form 1594

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE REFERRAL CARD

Department of the Army

Your Casualty Assistance Officer is: _____

Home Telephone Number: _____

Office Telephone Number: _____

Cell Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

Duty Officer Telephone Number: _____

The United States Army

Casualty Assistance Referral Card

(800-626-3317) and the number for Long Term Family Case Management (866-272-5841).

Be sure to write down your cell phone number and e-mail contact information. Additionally, write the same information on the last page of the Survivor's Guide to Benefits.

Preparation for Initial Phone Call

You are required to contact the NOK within four hours (between 0600 and 2200) after the notification to express condolences and schedule the initial visit. Exceptions include the following:

- The NOK, for whatever reason, requests otherwise; or
- If notification takes place close to 2200 hours, telephone contact will be made the next morning.

In preparing to make this call, you may want to write down what you will say and actually role-play the call, if necessary. Calling from the CAC will allow you to make initial contact while the details of your research are still fresh.

INITIAL PHONE CALL

The purpose of the initial phone call is to introduce yourself, express condolences, and schedule the first visit. Keep the following in mind:

- Identify yourself as their CAO, express condolences, and tactfully explain that you will be assisting them with a number of matters that will require their personal attention and decision.
- Never say that you've been "appointed" to assist them or use any bureaucratic-sounding jargon.
- Don't use terms such as "remains, body, deceased." Refer to the Soldier either by name or as "your husband, your son," and so on.

- Find out if there are any immediate problems or needs that require attention, i.e. financial or medical.
- Confirm the address and arrange a time for the first visit.

THE COMPLEXITY OF FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

As you will discover during your CAO duty, Family relationships can be complex. Every Family has different dynamics. Recognize that the death of the Soldier will likely raise a number of sensitive topics for the Family.

Conflicts may arise over benefits and entitlements. Federal statutes provide different benefits to a Soldier's relatives and, in some situations, to non-Family members based on established criteria. It is possible that the PNOK, the PERE, and the PADD are the same person, or they could be three different people. The person receiving the SGLI benefit might not be the same person who receives the Death Gratuity payment or even be a relative of the Soldier. The more entangled the Soldier's Family relationships, the more likely it is that competing requests and claims for benefits will be submitted.

Therefore, don't assume that a particular NOK is a beneficiary or has assumed a role that he or she might not be authorized to assume. Do not release beneficiary information to anyone other than the beneficiaries themselves.

The Army cannot become embroiled in Family or other civil disputes. Accordingly, do not allow yourself to become involved in a Family's internal differences and do not appear to support one relative's position over another's. You, as the CAO, must support the NOK you have been assigned to and not get involved in disputes with other members of the Family. Do not allow your own opinions or your own sense of justice or fairness to be used as a basis for deviating from the law or Army regulations.

You must follow the instructions and guidance that you receive from the CAC concerning benefits and entitlements due to the person you are assisting. Contact your CAC to resolve any questions or issues that arise concerning eligibility for a benefit or entitlement.

THE FIRST VISIT

Responding to the Media

Be aware that you may encounter media, especially on the first visit. Some cases will draw media attention. It is important that you know how to react and whom to call for assistance.

To help the Family manage the media, provide the name, address, and telephone number of the nearest military PAO to the NOK. The CAC should provide you with this contact information. If there is no local PAO, the Family can contact the HRC Public Affairs Officer at 703-325-8856.

If the Media Is Present

If media is present when you visit the NOK and the NOK does not wish to talk to the media, refer reporters to the local installation PAO. Be sure to respect the NOK's wishes in relation to the media.

In *your* responses to the media, limit them to your duties as the CAO. In particular, avoid discussion of circumstances surrounding the Soldier's death, military operations, or policies. If in doubt about whether to respond to a particular inquiry, avoid comment.

Do not address questions about the Family or your personal opinions about the military or its operations. You are there to support the Family. Protection of the NOK's privacy is your primary concern. If in doubt, avoid comment.

Conducting the First Visit

The amount of information discussed in your initial visit will be based on how much the NOK is prepared to talk. Be sensitive to their feelings. Take the time to get to know the NOK. Throughout the visit, keep the following in mind:

- Never make promises you can't keep or answer questions for which you are not 100% sure of the correct answer;
- Never speculate;
- Note all questions in your log and the follow-up actions that may be necessary.

Wear Your Class A Uniform to the First Visit You can wear your Class B uniform to subsequent

visits. You are required to wear Class As at the airport upon the return of the Soldier, the funeral, and to any ceremonial event.

Arrive on Time Remember, you do not get a second chance to make a good first impression. Upon arrival, introduce yourself and express condolences. Confirm that you are speaking to the correct NOK. If other persons are present, ask the person you are assisting if you can talk in private.

Referral Card Present the NOK with the Casualty Assistance Referral Card.

Determine Immediate Needs Determine whether the Family requires immediate financial assistance. The Family may be eligible to receive assistance from the following sources:

- Local Army Emergency Relief
- Local Red Cross

Confirm 45-Day Address Confirm the 45-day address—both mailing and physical—for the NOK, if this has not already been done by the CNO.

Confirm Names Confirm the correct spelling of all NOK names, any professional titles, and any common names used.

Confirm DD-93 Information Confirm that all NOK are accounted for on the *Soldier's Record of Emergency Data (DD Form 93)*, including all children. The deceased Soldier might not have listed all children on his or her *DD Form 93*. Also verify whether there were previous marriages. Approach these issues sensitively.

Begin Identifying and Collecting Documents

Encourage the NOK to begin gathering marriage licenses, divorce decrees, birth certificates—these will be needed to receive certain benefits. Without certain documents, benefits may be delayed or denied.

A key reason for the careful collection of information at this point is that the Department of the Army's case manager will be requesting confirmed information on the NOK. You will be coordinating not only with your local CAC, but also with the CMAOC case manager assigned to the case.

During your CAO duty, the Family should be able to reach you at all times, and you should respond to the Family's requests as soon as possible.

Other Issues to Discuss Important issues, such as the disposition of the remains, are typically discussed during follow-up visits. However, if you determine that the NOK is ready, be prepared to discuss the following issues.

THE DEATH GRATUITY PAYMENT

When the Soldier dies all pay and allowances stop. The Death Gratuity payment is intended to assist the Family with immediate financial needs until long-term benefits commence.

The death gratuity is paid to the eligible survivors of:

- Deceased active duty Soldiers; or
- Soldiers who die within 120 days of separation or retirement from active duty if the death is a result of a service-connected injury or illness. (This eligibility will be determined by the Department of Veterans Affairs.) (AR 600-8-1, 9-2)

Order of Precedence for Beneficiaries

The order of precedence for payment of the Death Gratuity is as follows:

- Lawful surviving spouse
- Child(ren)
- Parent(s)
- Siblings

If minor children are beneficiaries, DFAS will pay the Death Gratuity after guardianship of the child's estate is established. (AR 600-8-1, 9-2) If there is no surviving spouse, children, or designated natural parent, DFAS will determine the eligible beneficiary and make payment within 45 to 60 days.

A new Death Gratuity option allows Soldiers the opportunity to designate a person of their choosing to receive up to 50% (using 10% increments) of the Death Gratuity amount. For example, a Soldier may be married and have a child from a previous marriage or relationship. You may now leave 50% to the child for their immediate financial needs.

Death Gratuity Payment Options

If the NOK is prepared to discuss the Death Gratuity Payment, you can explain the payment options:

- **Entire Amount as a Check** In the first option, eligible recipients may elect to receive the entire amount in one payment. If this option is selected, the payment will be made via a single hand-delivered government check that you will deliver.
- **Entire Amount as Electronic Funds Transfer** With the second option, eligible recipients may elect to receive payment in the form of electronic funds transfer (EFT) directly to their financial organization. If this option is chosen, you will provide the beneficiary with a **Direct Deposit Sign-Up Form, SF 1199A**. The completed form, along with a blank check marked "VOID," will be required in order for finance to issue a payment via EFT.
- **Check and EFT** With the third option, eligible recipients may elect to receive a partial amount by check, and any remainder sent via EFT. If this option is selected, a single hand-delivered government check will be issued for the amount requested by the beneficiary.

The Death Gratuity is normally paid within 72 hours after the notification of death. If payment is by check, the CAC will brief you on procedures for delivering the check to the NOK. You will deliver the check on a follow-up visit, which is likely to occur within 24–48 hours of your initial visit.

If the Death Gratuity beneficiary resides in a state other than the state where the CAC supporting you is located, the local finance office nearest to the beneficiary will usually disburse the payment. Local Finance Offices will only make payments to spouses or parents. Payments to children, other Family members, or friends will be made by DFAS-Indiana.

If the payment is made by check, obtain the required certification and signature on the **Claim Certification and Voucher for Death Gratuity Payment (DD Form 397)** when presenting the check to the payee.

CLAIM CERTIFICATION AND VOUCHER FOR DEATH GRATUITY PAYMENT <small>(Act August 1, 1956, 70 Stat 857, and regulations pursuant thereto)</small>	
3. APPROPRIATION SYMBOL AND TITLE	
THE UNITED STATES, DR. TO:	5. NAME AND ADDRESS OF PAYEE (Street and Number, City and State)
THE SIX MONTHS' GRATUITY PAY AS THE RESULT OF THE DEATH OF A MEMBER OF THE ARMY IN ACCORDANCE WITH A FINDING BY THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY THAT THE DEATH WAS THE RESULT OF A SERVICE-CONNECTED INJURY OR ILLNESS. FOR THE SIX MONTHS' GRATUITY PAY AS THE RESULT OF THE DEATH OF A MEMBER OF THE ARMY IN ACCORDANCE WITH A FINDING BY THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY THAT THE DEATH WAS THE RESULT OF A SERVICE-CONNECTED INJURY OR ILLNESS.	

DD Form 397

You may encounter hostility or rejection when you discuss the death gratuity payment. If the NOK you're assisting declines the payment, contact the CAC immediately.

STATUS OF REMAINS

Neither the status of the remains nor funeral arrangements are usually discussed on the first visit, unless the death is current (non-Theater). However, it is highly likely that you will be asked about the status of the Soldier's remains.

Answering Questions about the Remains

If asked about the status of the remains, you can convey the information you have been authorized to discuss. But do not discuss circumstances surrounding the death of the Soldier, beyond what is in the casualty report. Never speculate. Assure the NOK that they will receive more information, as it becomes available through official sources. Be sure to note their questions and concerns and report these to the CAC and to your CMAOC case manager.

Funeral Arrangements

Funeral arrangements are not usually discussed on the first visit. If the NOK asks, however, caution them not to start making any funeral arrangements until the medical examiner has completed his or her examination (for Theater cases) and the CAC has requested disposition instructions.

Also, the NOK might not be the PADD. (See section below describing the PADD.) If the NOK is unaware that he or she is not the PADD, explain the situation to them and defer discussion of funeral arrangements until a follow-up visit.

Family Funeral Travel

Family funeral travel will be discussed with the PADD at the time disposition of remains instructions are briefed. The PADD will be advised that his or her decision concerning the place of interment may be influenced by the travel entitlement.

POSTHUMOUS CITIZENSHIP

If the Soldier is an alien or non-citizen national and dies as a result of injury or disease incurred while on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces during specified periods of military hostilities, he or she may be granted U.S. citizenship posthumously.

The CMAOC Case Manager determines whether the deceased Soldier is eligible for posthumous citizenship according to the following criteria:

- The deceased was admitted to the United States as a lawful permanent resident; and
- The casualty occurred during specified periods of military hostilities.

Why would a PNOK want his or her loved one to have citizenship? First, a Soldier must be a U.S. citizen to be buried in a national cemetery. Second, citizenship of the deceased may make it easier for the deceased's spouse, parents, and children to get residency of U.S. citizenship.

Explain the implications of posthumous citizenship to the PNOK, who must make the decision. You must ensure that the next of kin understands their benefits are not affected by citizenship. Also, if the deceased meets the criteria, and if the PNOK accepts this option, the PNOK needs to make the decision as quickly as possible so that the posthumous citizenship can be presented at the funeral.

If the PNOK decides to proceed, work directly with your case manager and the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) to process the request.

AUTHORIZATION FOR DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION FORMS

Obtain several copies of the **Authorization for Disclosure of Information** forms and the appropriate cover letters. The goals of these forms are to authorize the Army to provide the NOK's contact information to private individuals, organizations, Members of Congress, and other sources who wish to offer condolences, gifts, grants, scholarships, and so on to the Family.

At some point, although not usually during your first visit, you will present copies of these

Death Gratuity Payment Options

- Entire amount in one payment
- Entire amount as Electronic Funds Transfer
- Check and EFT

forms to each PNOK. All NOK eligible to receive assistance must be given the opportunity to sign the forms. When the time comes to present the forms, your CAC will brief you fully on their use.

Due to Privacy Act Laws, the Army cannot release contact information to third parties without the written consent of the individual. Only contact information about the NOK will be provided in the forms, not any other confidential information, such as social security numbers. Note also that the Army does not affect any gifting decisions made by external organizations.

AFTER LEAVING THE RESIDENCE

After you leave the NOK's residence:

- Call the CAC and provide confirmed information. **Never call from the NOK's residence.** Relay any questions or concerns the Family expressed.
- Note in your **DA Form 1594** the assistance provided and any action items required.
- Log appropriate entries on the CAO After Action Report. Your management of your **DA Form 1594** and After Action Report is very important. You will be dealing with a lot of information from different sources. It is very important to keep all actions organized throughout your assignment.

SUMMARY OF FIRST VISIT

The initial visit should not last more than an hour unless the NOK wants you to stay longer.

Expect to be asked a lot of questions. But do not guess at answers, do not speculate, and do not assume facts without verification. Provide official information only. When you are uncertain about an answer to a question, reply, "I don't know, but I will get an answer for you."

Create a "To Do" list of issues the NOK has, questions to answer, actions to take, and so on. You can and *should* share this "To Do" list with the NOK.

And remember—perhaps most importantly—you can be somewhat flexible about completing the paperwork, so long as the proper paperwork is done on time. In many cases, due to grief, the NOK simply cannot concentrate fully on the paperwork. You may have to explain things more than once. You may need to

return several times to complete the necessary documents. Remember—you are there to take care of the hearts of the NOK, not simply fill out paperwork.

PHASE II: SUBSEQUENT VISITS

You will be making many subsequent visits to the NOK. Always schedule them ahead of time. You can wear your Class B uniform on these visits unless you are:

- Attending ceremonial events; and
- Attending the funeral.

Be sure to maintain your "To Do" list to keep track of items you and the NOK need to accomplish. As mentioned earlier, stay organized and document your actions, because the Family member may be too distracted to keep track of everything, or even to pay attention to what is being said.

PERSON AUTHORIZED TO DIRECT DISPOSITION (PADD)

Decisions regarding the disposition of the remains and funeral/memorial arrangements are the responsibility of the PADD. The PADD is identified on Item 13 of the Soldier's **DD Form 93**. This person may or may not be the PNOK; the PADD may not always be the spouse. Soldiers may designate a spouse or a blood relative. If the Soldier did not make an election, the following order of precedence will be used to designate the PADD:

1. Spouse
2. Eldest child over 18
3. Elder/custodial parent
4. Eldest sibling over 18
5. Eldest grandparent
6. Other blood relatives in order of seniority
7. Remarried surviving spouse
8. Other interested persons
9. Secretary of the Army (Reference: AR 638-2)

DISPOSITION OF REMAINS (FROM THEATER)

This section discusses the overall remains handling process, for a Theater death, from the time of death to arrival at the funeral home.

An average of seven days is required to prepare and ship the remains of a Soldier, from the time of death and recovery from the site of the incident to arrival at the funeral home. Here are the key steps for a Theater-related death:

Recovery from Incident Site to Mortuary

The remains of the Soldier are recovered from the site of the incident and transported to the port mortuary at Dover Air Force Base (AFB), Delaware, via strategic airlift. This usually takes about two days.

Identification and Autopsy of the Remains The autopsy (if required) and identification take about a day. At the mortuary, an FBI team and odontologist make a forensic identification. An autopsy is conducted to determine the cause and manner of death.

Preparation and Arrangement for Shipping

Preparation of the remains and shipment takes about three days.

After the autopsy:

- Disposition instructions are obtained from the PADD using DA Form 7302 (see below for the process);
- Remains are prepared (embalmed);
- Remains are dressed/casketed;
- Escort travels to the port mortuary;
- Flight arrangements are made by Dover AFB;
- Escort departs with the remains to receiving funeral home.

The escort's trip with the remains to the funeral home takes about another day.

This overall time frame can vary. All times are averages. Some processes may take longer than others. Remains can also be delayed for a number of reasons, such as difficulty in identifying remains gathered from a multiple casualty incident. Therefore, the PADD cannot make decisions regarding the funeral dates until the arrival time of the Soldier's remains is confirmed.

Dignified Transport of Remains Process As soon as the Family hears that their loved one will be arriving at Dover, they may want to go there to welcome them home. While this is their option,

you as the CAO must help them understand the following:

- They will have to pay all expenses for the trip;
- They may not arrive in time to meet the aircraft;
- There is no way the Family can be assured the remains belong to their loved one;
- They will not be able to view the Soldier at any point while at Dover; and
- Their travel can delay decisions necessary to move the remains to the location for the funeral (funeral paperwork cannot be completed).

If they still insist on going, notify the CAC to receive further instructions.

IDENTIFICATION AND VIEWABILITY OF THE REMAINS

The identification and viewability of the Soldier's remains is critically important to the Family.

Identification of the Remains

You will receive information from the CAC or CMAOC regarding the date and method by which the Armed Forces Medical Examiner or other medical examiner identified the remains as well as who identified the remains. You will advise the Family of the remains identification date and methods used. The methods of identification are via DNA samples, dental records, and fingerprinting.

Viewability of the Remains

The NOK and the PADD will ask you about the viewability of their loved one. Do not attempt to answer this question until you verify the condition of the remains with the CAC or CMAOC. The preparing mortuary will provide its professional opinion as to the condition of the remains.

The PADD will need to know the category of viewability in order to make appropriate funeral/memorial arrangements. There are three categories of viewability:

- **Viewable** – a viewable casualty will look lifelike and will be suitable for viewing in an open casket.

- **Viewable for the purpose of identification** – A viewable casualty for the purposes of identification will have some disfigurement, but still have recognizable, identifying features. It may be suitable for an open casket, depending upon the nature and extent of the disfigurement.
- **Non-viewable** – A non-viewable casualty will not look life-like, will exhibit significant trauma, with extreme dismemberment or extensive decomposition.

You will be asked to pass this information to the PADD. The decision to open the casket and view the remains always rests with the PADD.

The Army only *recommends* viewable or non-viewable status. The Army does not “seal” caskets, although they are airtight when transported. The preparing mortuary will provide its professional opinion regarding viewability.

If, despite Army recommendations, the PADD insists on viewing the remains, encourage them to discuss the issue with the funeral director. Work with the funeral director to assist in making that decision.

The CAC or the CMAOC case manager will provide you with sample pictures of how the Soldier will look. You will have to go over this information with the funeral director and the PADD. Later, when you are at the funeral room and the Family decides to view the non-viewable Soldier, excuse yourself from the room. The funeral director will proceed to open the casket with only the Family member/s present.

Before the viewing, make sure the deceased Soldier’s uniform is correct and all awards and decorations are present and aligned according to Army Regulation 670-1.

DISASSOCIATED REMAINS

In some cases, additional partial remains may not have been recovered or may be recovered at a later date. These are referred to as *disassociated remains*. Your CMAOC case manager will contact you if this applies to your case. You will then need to discuss forms **CJMAB 1** and **3** with the PADD.

These forms apply when partial remains have been recovered and identified, and there is the

possibility of recovering additional remains. Using these forms, the PADD will decide on the disposition of any additional remains. These forms will need to be completed prior to making interment arrangements.

Central Joint Mortuary Affairs Board (CJMAB) Forms 1 and 3

CJMAB Form 1 – Disposition of Remains Election Statement – Initial Notification of Identified Partial Remains

The CJMAB Form 1 is designed so that the PADD can review their options and make their selection known in the event that only partial remains have been found and to prepare them for the eventuality that other remains could be found in the future. It is important to understand both sections of this form.

▪ **Section I: Election for Currently Recovered Remains** has two options:

- *Option 1* allows the PADD to inter the partial remains that have been identified at this time.
- *Option 2* requires all currently recovered remains to be identified prior to shipping to the PADD.

▪ **Section II: Election in the Event of Future Identification.** This also has two options:

- *Option 1* requires the Army to contact the PADD if additional remains are identified for disposition.
- *Option 2* enables the PADD to direct the appropriate military branch dispose of the remains honorably and with dignity.

You must provide this form to the PADD and witness their signature. If the PADD selects *Option 1* in Section II, and additional remains are identified, they must complete CJMAB Form 3.

CJMAB Form 3 – Disposition of Remains Election Statement – Notification of Subsequently Identified Partial Remains

In *Option 1* of this form, the remains are transferred to be placed in the original casket and it is shipped to the funeral home or cemetery. In *Option 2*, the remains are shipped in a suitable container and it is placed above the original casket. In *Option 3*, the remains are cremated and returned to the PADD. This address can be to the PADD’s residence or to a particular cemetery.

In *Option 4*, the Family will not receive the remains. Remains are handled by the service. This does not necessarily mean cremation. Basically, the military service will dispose of the remains in a dignified manner. In *Option 5*, the remains are held by the Armed Forces Medical Examiner System for teaching and research with the final disposition as a medical specimen.

DISPOSITION INSTRUCTIONS

The PADD must select their preferred interment option. You will brief the PADD regarding these decisions after positive identification of the remains. Do not begin the discussion until the CAC instructs you to do so. Note that the options concerning Family funeral travel may influence the PADD's decision about interment options.

DA Form 7302

The disposition instructions are contained in the ***Disposition of Remains Statement (DA Form 7302)***. The CAC will brief you on the key issues so that you understand the various briefing options. And remember—do not request disposition instructions until instructed by your CAC or Case Manager.

Before you fill out the form, ask the PADD to consult with their funeral director so that they understand all the relevant issues.

There are six options on ***DA Form 7302***:

Option 1 – Civilian Cemetery

- The Army will pay for all transportation of the remains from the place of death to the **civilian cemetery** of choice.
- The Army will pay for the casket (wood or metal) and preparation of remains.
- The Army will defray the cost of a normal funeral up to a certain amount. (See AR 638-2 Chapter 1 Table 1-2.)

Option 2 – Government Cemetery

- The Army will pay for all transportation of the remains from the place of death to the **government** cemetery of choice.
- The Army will pay for the casket (wood or metal) and preparation of remains.
- The Army will pay for interment in a government cemetery of choice.
- The government will defray the cost of a normal funeral up to a certain amount. (See AR 638-2 Chapter 1 Table 1-2.)

DISPOSITION OF REMAINS STATEMENT	
For use of this form, see AR 638-2; the proponent agency is ODC	
DATA REQUIRED BY THE PRIVACY ACT OF 1974	
ORITY:	Title 10 USC, Sections 1481 through 1488; EO 9397.
CIPAL PURPOSE:	To record disposition of remains desired by the person authorized to direct d
INE USES:	By Department of Army to enable PADD to apply for authorized benefits.
OSURE:	Disclosure of requested information is voluntary; however, if not provided, b
NAME OF DECEASED (Last, First, Middle Initial)	2. RANK OF DECEASED
NAME AND ADDRESS	

DA Form 7302

Option 3 – Gravesite Funeral at a Government Cemetery

- The Army will pay for all transportation of the remains from the place of death to the government cemetery of choice.
- The Army will pay for the casket (wood or metal) and preparation of remains.
- The Army will defray the cost of the grave side services up to a certain amount for the funeral.

Option 4 – Cremation Option

- The Army will pay for all transportation from the place of death to the government or civilian cemetery of choice.
- The Army will pay for the Army Urn (wood or bronze) of choice and preparation and cremation of remains.
- The Army will defray the cost of the funeral expenses up to the same cost as in Options one, two or three.



Note: Each state has its own cremation laws

Option 5 – Family Assumes All Arrangements

- The Family will assume all arrangements, preparation of the remains, and coordinate transportation of the remains. Upon completion of the funeral, the CAO will need to assist the PADD in applying for reimbursement.
- The Army will provide a burial allowance to cover costs of a normal funeral in a civilian cemetery or in a government cemetery. (See AR 638-2 Chapter 1 Table 1-1, 1-2, and 1-3 for details.) Ensure that the PADD is aware of the maximum amount that could be reimbursed by the government.



Note: This option could be costly for the Family and using more than one funeral director is expensive. In general, funeral homes have available packages that are usually the most economical; the “à la carte” options are more expensive.

Option 6 – PADD Relinquishes Rights

- The PADD relinquishes their authority.
- The successor PADD will be the next person in the PADD order of precedence.
- The PADD cannot designate any successor PADD and does not have any rights regarding the funeral arrangements.
- If the PADD wishes to designate a specific person to assume disposition, a power of attorney will be required. (AR 638-2, 4-5)

Escorting the PADD to the Funeral Home

Before completing the DA Form 7302, escort the PADD to the funeral home:

- Coordinate with the funeral director to determine the requirements for the local cemetery;
- Coordinate with the funeral director to ensure there is space available in the chosen cemetery;
- Contact your CMAOC case manager if the PADD elects to inter the Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery.

Complete DA Form 7302

When you work on this form, make sure to address the following:

- If the PADD selects a government cemetery, you must coordinate the availability of a grave site.
- Ensure the type of casket/urn is properly indicated.
- If the PADD selects *Option 5*, ensure that the PADD fully understands the potential financial obligations they may incur, especially in overseas death cases. Your CAC will provide you with the specific maximum allowable dollar amount that could be reimbursed to the PADD.

After you’ve explained all of these options carefully to the PADD, he or she must sign in the appropriate area. You’ll sign as witness. Submit this form to your CAC as soon as possible, either in person or electronically.

But do not rush through the decision-making process; give the Family sufficient time to consider the options fully.

Issues to Keep in Mind

- Remains can be cremated after the funeral service, and the Army will pay for those expenses. The Family should know this in advance so that Dover can send an urn in the casket.
- If *Option 5* is chosen on form **DA Form 7302**, the port mortuary at Dover AFB will process the cremation and then send the cremains to the local funeral home. This process is for Soldiers who’ve died in a theater of operations or some overseas area.
- The port mortuary restoration of the Soldier’s remains is for shipping only; the remains may need to be “touched up” at the receiving funeral home.

PLANNING FOR THE FUNERAL

As arrangements continue for the funeral, keep the PNOK and PADD informed and make every effort to assist the Family with their funeral needs. Do not finalize funeral/memorial plans until the Soldier’s remains have arrived at the funeral home.

Flag Cases

There are a maximum of four flags authorized for each Soldier. These flags and flag cases are presented at the interment service. The following are eligible to receive flags:

- Spouse
- Parents (If parents are separated, each parent receives a flag)
- PADD

There are no exceptions to this list. For example, if the Soldier has no spouse but has a living child, the child is not entitled to a flag case. Only parents, spouse, and PADD are eligible for flag cases.

MILITARY TRANSPORT OF REMAINS

The PADD can request military contracted air transport of their loved one’s remains versus commercial transport, from Dover, Delaware to the destination of the Soldier’s final resting place. The military contract aircraft can fly into

Funeral Options on DA Form 7302

1. Civilian ceremony
2. Government ceremony
3. Gravesite funeral at a government cemetery
4. Cremation
5. Family assumes all arrangements
6. PADD relinquishes rights

most airports around the country, even some of the smallest local airports. The aircraft is met by the Family, an honors team, and the hearse that will transport the Soldier to the funeral home.

This option applies only to Soldiers who die in a theater of combat operations and whose remains are identified and prepared at Dover Port Mortuary or military medical centers.

The PADD selects their air transportation option on Central Joint Mortuary Affairs Board, CJMAB Form 4. There are two options and a General Waiver.

Option 1 directs military airlift support to the airport nearest the funeral home or internment site selected by the PADD.

Option 2 allows for transportation by commercial aircraft. However, flights are limited to commercial airports which may not be close to the receiving funeral home.

The General Waiver allows the Army to select the method of transportation that will return the Soldier in the most expeditious manner. Brief the PADD on these options, then witness and obtain their signature on the form. The PADD should indicate their preferred airport in the notes. Forward the form to the CAC as soon as possible.

CMAOC Form 5 will be used if the distance to the funeral home or internment site is less than 300 miles. If the distance is less than 150 miles, the remains will be transported by hearse, with no other options for the PADD. If the distance is between 150 and 300 miles, the PADD may select a hearse or aircraft. If aircraft is selected and the death is from Operations Iraqi Freedom or Enduring Freedom, CJMAB Form 4 must be completed.

ESCORTING OF REMAINS

The remains of all Soldiers are escorted from Dover, Delaware to the funeral home. There are two types of escorts.

Unit Escort

The Unit Escort is appointed by the Soldier's military unit. This escort must be of the same branch of military service as the Soldier, be neat

in appearance and of good character, and of a rank at least equal to that of the Soldier.

Special Escort

A Special Escort is one specifically requested by the PADD, such as a close relative.

If the Family requests a Special Escort, never say "no" without first communicating with the CAC. The request must be submitted in writing through the CAC to CMAOC. CMAOC will make the final determination.

Don't raise the Family's hopes by giving them the impression that their request will be approved because such requests can be denied. An example of a denial would be if the escort must travel from the theater of combat operations or other place and this causes a delay.

Caution the Family against using a close Family member as an escort, given the emotional impact of the duty.

Coordinating with the Escort

Establish communication with the escort as soon as one is identified and coordinate their date and time of arrival. You might need to assist the escort by driving him/her to the hotel or the rental car location.

PLANESIDE HONORS

The planeside honors procedure was initiated on January 1, 2007. When the Soldier arrives at the airport, an honors team conducts the planeside honors. If the Family decides to meet the Soldier, you must accompany them, dressed in your Class A uniform. However, even if the Family decides not to meet the Soldier, you must do so.

You are essential to the success of this procedure. Review the Planeside Honors training materials and become familiar with the process. Coordinate between the funeral home, the airport, and the CAC for planeside honors procedures and for any additional roles and responsibilities you might have. After completion of the ceremony, provide a verbal after action report to your CMAOC Case Manager.

In addition to receiving a flag case, the Family is also eligible to receive special lapel buttons that honor the sacrifice made by their loved ones.

FAMILY FUNERAL TRAVEL

The government authorizes reimbursement for per-diem and round-trip airfare to the interment location for the spouse, minor children, parents, in-laws, and step-parents of the Soldier. This is the primary funeral location as chosen by the PADD. Reimbursement will also cover guardians and support personnel for children and handicapped relatives eligible for travel.

These travel benefits are mandated by federal law; therefore exceptions can not be considered or approved. If the Soldier's remains are non-recoverable, travel to a memorial service is covered. Ask your CAC manager for the current benefit.

If an authorized person declines the travel benefit, the benefit cannot be transferred.

Unit Memorial Services Most units perform a memorial service at their unit installation. However, federal law not does cover travel of Family members to the unit memorial service. If the Soldier's unit offers travel to the NOK, it's up to the unit to fund it.

The CAC will let you know who is authorized to travel, so you can inform the PADD. ***The PADD should consider these travel limitations when making disposition arrangements.*** At times, a desired interment location might be in a different state and Family members, other than the ones listed above (such as siblings), might not be able to fund their travel. The PADD might then decide to select an interment location closer to the rest of the Family.

You'll brief the travel benefit to the PADD when you request the disposition instructions.

Afterwards, you will brief other Family members entitled to the travel benefit.

Reimbursement Vouchers

When the Family has completed their travel, they must submit vouchers for reimbursement.

DD Form 1351-2 Travel Voucher or Subvoucher must be filed for this purpose.

Upon the Family's return from the burial, assist them in filling out ***DD Form 1351-2***. Once the traveler(s) has signed the form, provide a copy to the CAC and follow the instructions provided by the CAC.

Annotate this action in your AAR and make a log entry in ***DA Form 1594***. Follow up with the Family member to ensure they receive the travel reimbursement. Once you've received confirmation, note the completed action in the your AAR and ***DA Form 1594***.

ACCOMPANYING THE FAMILY TO THE FUNERAL HOME

After planeside honors, then you will escort the hearse to the receiving funeral home. If your CAO duties conflict with the arrival of the remains, you must find a replacement to perform these duties at the airport, and keep the CAC informed of all information and changes.

Coordinate with your escort in advance; speak with one voice and share all relevant information. Assist the escort to find accommodations, if he/she is not from the area.

At the Funeral Home

At the funeral home, view and inspect the remains with the escort and the funeral director first. Make sure there is no leakage and that the casket is correct. Ensure that the Soldier's uniform is properly arranged and that all his awards are present. If any items are missing, immediately inform the CAC.

After you complete the inspection, the Family may view their loved one for the first time. This is a solemn moment, a heart wrenching time. Be prepared. You may remain with the Family while they view the remains unless the remains are considered non-viewable or the Family prefers to be alone.

TRAVEL VOUCHER OR SUBVOUCHER				Read Privacy Act Statement, Penalty Statement, and instructions completing form. Use typewriter, ink, or ball point pen. PR pencil. If more space is needed, continue in remarks.	
1. PAYMENT <input type="checkbox"/> Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) <input type="checkbox"/> Payment by Check		SPLIT DISBURSEMENT: The Paying Office will pay directly to the Government Travel Charge Card (GTCC) contractor the portion representing travel charges for transportation, lodging, and rental car if you are a civilian employee, unless you elect a different amount to designate a payment that equals the total of their outstanding government travel card balance to the GTCC contractor. <input type="checkbox"/> Pay the following amount of this reimbursement directly to the Government Travel Charge Card contractor:			
2. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial) (Print or type)		3. GRADE	4. SSN		5. TYPE OF PAYMENT <input type="checkbox"/> TDY <input type="checkbox"/> PCS <input type="checkbox"/> Dependent(s)
6. ADDRESS: a. NUMBER AND STREET		b. CITY	c. STATE	d. ZIP CODE	
e. E-MAIL ADDRESS					
7. DAYTIME TELEPHONE NUMBER & AREA CODE		8. TRAVEL ORDER/AUTHORIZATION NUMBER		9. PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT PAYMENTS/ADVANCES	
10. ORGANIZATION AND STATION		11. FOR D.O. USE a. D.O. VOUCHER b. SUBVOUCHER			
12. DEPENDENT(S) (X and complete as applicable) <input type="checkbox"/> ACCOMPANIED <input type="checkbox"/> UNACCOMPANIED		13. DEPENDENT'S ADDRESS ON RECEIPT OF ORDERS (Include Zip Code)			
a. NAME (Last, First, Middle Initial)		b. RELATIONSHIP		c. DATE OF BIRTH	

DD Form 1351-2

LAPEL BUTTONS

In addition to receiving a flag case, the Family is also eligible to receive special lapel buttons that honor the sacrifice made by their loved ones.

These buttons are authorized by Congress in order to provide an appropriate identification for the spouse, parents, siblings, children, and children through adoption, of the Soldier.

They include the following:

Gold Star Lapel Button

The Gold Star lapel button is awarded to relatives of Soldiers killed while engaged in military operations involving conflict with an opposing force or terrorist attack. All Soldiers in the theater of operations of OEF/OIF are eligible. Recipients can include widow/widowers, parents, children, and siblings of fallen Soldiers.

Lapel Button

Lapel buttons are awarded to families of any Soldier who has died while on Active duty or to families of an U.S. Army Reserve or National Guard Soldier on drill status. Widow/widowers, parents, children, and siblings of fallen Soldiers are eligible.

Ask the escort if he/she was given buttons by Dover; if not, request buttons from your CAC. Your CAC will inform you of eligibility requirements, which lapel button is to be presented, and will make them available to you.

Schedule an appropriate time prior to the funeral or interment service to present the lapel buttons. The Family can thus wear them to the funeral and interment.

PREPARING FOR THE FUNERAL

In preparing for the funeral, confirm the following with the Family:

- If military honors are requested;
- Who should present the flag to the Family;
- Whether they object to a General Officer (GO) or military presence.

Presence of General Officers at Funeral

The Chief of Staff of the Army has directed GO attendance at the funeral or memorial service

of an Active Duty Soldier who dies while participating in an ongoing operation. The GO's primary role is to provide presence and support, and to represent the Chief of Staff of the Army.

Ask the Family whether they have any objections to the GO's attendance at the funeral. If they do, report this information immediately to the CAC and CMAOC, and no GO will be asked to attend.

You should coordinate with the GO's staff to provide any additional assistance and resolve any problems or issues. If the GO does not attend, *you* will be representing the Secretary of the Army at the funeral.

CAO Role in Military Funeral Honors

Your role in the MFH includes the following:

Coordinate with the Military Funeral Honors Contact

Obtain MFH contact information for the NCOIC—the Non-Commissioned Officer in Charge—from your CAC. Coordinate with the NCOIC before the funeral; communicate the Family's wishes/expectations; and discuss your participation in the flag presentation, if required.

Coordinate with the General Officer (GO)

Coordinate the GO's role with his aide or executive officer. Make sure the aide knows whether the GO will be expected to make presentations.

Your primary responsibility remains the Family; the GO's office will take care of logistics for the GO. The GO's aide must work with the local Recruiting Command to make all lodging and other arrangements for the GO.

You will brief the GO about any special requests from the Family; the flag presentation; posthumous awards presentations; or a posthumous citizenship presentation.

Remember: These are civilian ceremonies where the military is an invited guest. Always defer to the Family's wishes. Your degree of involvement will depend on the desires of the PADD. You should be prepared to give any needed assistance to the NOK at the interment location. This assistance may include transporting Family

members, coordinating lodging, and confirming departure arrangements.

THE FUNERAL

Your overall duties at the funeral include the following:

- Represent the Secretary of the Army if no GO attends;
- Coordinate and monitor the performance of the MFH team; and
- Present or coordinate the flag and flag case presentation.

Attendance at the Funeral

You will attend the funeral unless the NOK requests otherwise or the funeral service is performed outside your area of responsibility. If this is the case, another CAO in that area may be assigned to assist. Your CAC will notify the CAC in the area where the cemetery is located to appoint an interment CAO.

This CAC will ensure that a CAO of appropriate rank will assist in completing the funeral arrangements and meet the NOK when they arrive in the city where the cemetery is located. You should coordinate with other CAOs assigned to assist the NOK to ensure a smooth transition and resolve any potential problems or issues.

Final Preparation

Before the funeral, conduct a final check—are medals in order, have the flag cases arrived, are posthumous awards ready, has everyone been briefed on their role? It's your responsibility to ensure that everything is correct.

At the Funeral

You will attend the funeral wearing your Class A uniform. At the funeral, be prepared for unexpected situations. There might be unwelcome Family members, groups, or protesters. There may be situations in which a divorced parent who has not previously played a role in the Soldier's life shows up at the funeral. Unknown children may show up. Pay attention to the participants. If the situation becomes volatile, remember, you represent the Secretary of the Army. Do not take sides or get involved in Family disputes.

Presenting the Flag

An interment flag will be sent with the remains.

Additional flags, as authorized by law, will be provided by the funeral honors team. Do not offer or promise flags to anyone who is not authorized to receive them. As mentioned above, flags are authorized for:

- The spouse;
- Parent(s); and
- The PADD.

Coordinate with the CAC providing the funeral honors team to determine your role, if any, in presenting the flag. If the PADD requests that you present the flag, use the following presentation:

“This flag is presented on behalf of a grateful nation and the United States Army in appreciation for your loved one’s honorable and faithful service.”

Funeral Feedback

You will monitor the MFH team's performance. Note the following:

- Proper formation;
- Military bearing;
- Flag folding procedures;
- Family feedback concerning the funeral.

After the funeral, provide feedback to the MFH team and to the CAC on the performance of the MFH team, as well as any comments the Family had. The funeral director may also provide feedback to the CAC. Your CAC may ask you to complete an After Action Report on the professionalism of the MFH team.

PHASE III: POST-FUNERAL ASSISTANCE

Introduction

Schedule a visit to the NOK two days after the funeral. This begins Phase III of your CAO duty, which consists of a wide range of assistance to the NOK. This assistance includes the following:

- Assisting in the reimbursement of funeral expenses;
- Applying for benefits and entitlements;
- Requesting official reports and the results of investigations;
- Coordinating the return of personal effects.

Your CAO AAR will help you track necessary actions throughout this phase. Every time you submit a claim for a benefit or entitlement, be sure to annotate the information in your AAR. Once you've confirmed with the NOK that a particular benefit has been received, annotate it on Part 2 of the AAR.

You will be conducting many follow-up visits, until all applications for benefits, entitlements, and reports have been submitted. This can take weeks, but more likely several months. Your CAO duty is not complete until the NOK has received all benefits and entitlements, and you have been released by the CAC.

When introducing benefits and entitlements to the beneficiary, do not quote exact sums.

Your CAC will provide you with a checklist of agencies you will be contacting. For more information about benefits, visit the CMAOC Web site. The more you hear and read about these benefits the easier it will be for you to remember the essential information.

Do not attempt to brief all benefits in one meeting with the NOK. Remember, they have experienced an unexpected loss and are in the process of grieving. They may not be able to focus or concentrate on what you're saying.

FUNERAL/INTERMENT EXPENSES

Discuss the payment of funeral/interment expenses with the PADD and assist in completing **DD Form 1375**, the ***Request for Payment of Funeral and/or Interment Expenses***.

The PADD must sign the form to receive payment and then pay the funeral home, or have the money sent directly to the funeral home.

If the claimant wants the check to go to the funeral home, you will need to contact the funeral home to get its Tax Payer ID number.

A complete list of authorized covered expenses can be found in DA PAM 638-2. The Family must discuss any expenses that are not authorized for reimbursement in order to determine how they will be paid.

LEGAL ASSISTANCE

The legal assistance office can advise and assist the NOK regarding potential legal issues, such as estate tax planning and income tax benefits that arise as a result of the death.

For example, when a Soldier dies as a result of injuries received in a combat zone, in an area "in direct support" of a combat operation, or in a qualified hazardous duty area, any federal income tax liability for the tax year in which the death occurred will be forgiven.

Early in the process, contact the servicing legal assistance office and schedule an appointment with the NOK. It is important for legal assistance to review the will and any estate planning documents (such as deeds, insurance policies, IRAs, Thrift Savings Plans, tax statements, and other beneficiary designation accounts) before the NOK applies for various benefits.

Gathering Key Documents

An essential task early in this process is to assist the NOK to obtain certified copies of critical documents that will be needed when applying for benefits and settling the estate. The NOK should locate or know the whereabouts of these documents.

Caution the NOK to never give the original or a permanent, personal, or Family record to another person, even for business purposes. Certified copies have all the legal status of the original and ensures that if the original is needed again it will be available.

Important Documents to Maintain

- ☐ Birth Certificates (all Family members)
- ☐ DD Form 1300 (Report of Casualty)
- ☐ Civilian Death Certificates (can be purchased through the funeral home – at least 12 certified copies are recommended)
- ☐ DD Form 2064 (Overseas Death Certificate)
- ☐ Marriage Certificate
- ☐ Divorce decree
- ☐ Immigration documents
- ☐ Naturalization papers
- ☐ Adoption and/or custody documents
- ☐ Social Security Number/Card (for all Family members)
- ☐ Wills and Deeds of Trust
- ☐ Insurance policies (life, home, vehicles, boat, etc.)
- ☐ Income tax records (last three years recommended)
- ☐ Copies of deeds, abstracts, mortgages, rental contracts, etc.
- ☐ Documents referring to bank accounts (checking, savings), loans, securities, stocks, bonds, etc.
- ☐ References to safe deposit boxes
- ☐ Any reference to an outstanding debt
- ☐ Titles, automobile registrations

Report of Casualty

You will receive 10 certified copies of an interim **Report of Casualty (DD Form 1300)** within 10 days from the date of death. After you ensure that all information on this report is accurate, provide them to the NOK. The information in this report will be needed when applying for all benefits and entitlements.

Copies of **DD Form 1300** are automatically provided by the U.S. Army Human Resources Command (AHRC-PEC) to various government agencies, such as the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Social Security Administration, and the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS).



Note: Some commercial life insurance companies will accept this form in lieu of a Certificate of Death for cashing bonds and for other purposes where proof of death is required.

ARMY EMERGENCY RELIEF

Army Emergency Relief (AER) is a private nonprofit organization whose mission is to help Army people and their dependents, including spouses and children of deceased Soldiers. Assistance to spouses and children may be provided based on an emergency need, a sustaining need, or a special one-time need. Assistance can take the form of money for:

- Food, rent or utilities;
- Emergency transportation and vehicle repair;
- Funeral expenses;
- Medical/dental expenses;
- Personal needs when pay is delayed or stolen; and
- Education assistance to widows/ers and unmarried dependent children of Army members.

AER includes a lifetime membership in the Armed Forces Services Corporation (AFSC). AFSC offers many services to help survivors plan for their future needs. AFSC provides a detailed breakdown of all benefits and entitlements the NOK is eligible to receive. This breakdown helps the NOK, the Retirement Services Officer, and the CAO.

To receive this detailed report, obtain an AER release form signed by the NOK and fax it to the telephone number listed.

This AER program with AFSC is highly recommended for spouses of our fallen Soldiers. For more information, visit:

www.afsc-vsa.com/societies.html

DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS BENEFITS

During one of your follow-up visits, you will escort the NOK to the local Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) office for an explanation of the following benefits:

- Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC);
- Educational Benefits;
- Home Loan Guarantee;

DD Form 1300

- GI Bill Contribution Refund;
- Bereavement Counseling.

Information about VA benefits is available at the VA's Web site: **www.va.gov**

Depending on the NOK's location, the VA might schedule a briefing at the NOK's residence, in coordination with the CAO.

Bereavement Counseling

The VA's Office of Readjustment Counseling offers grief counseling to families of Soldiers who die while on Active Duty. The counseling is available at Veterans Centers throughout the United States, including Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The program also serves families of reservists and National Guardsmen who die while activated for Federal duty. No medical diagnosis is required to seek help, and services are completely confidential.

If you identify that the NOK is having a hard time adjusting, explain the availability of this service. If the NOK wants to take advantage of the service, contact the VA's Readjustment Counseling Service at 202-273-9116 or by e-mail at **vet.center@hq.med.va.gov**.

A counselor will immediately contact the NOK. At times, a counselor will come to the NOK's residence if needed.

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is a monthly benefit paid to eligible survivors of a service member who died on Active Duty and the Line of Duty (LOD) determination was "In the Line of Duty;" or a veteran whose death resulted from a service-related injury or disease.

Eligible survivors may include the following:

- Spouse
- Child(ren)
- Parent(s).

The parents must meet certain eligibility requirements; they must be sole survivors (unmarried Soldier with no children) to apply. Eligible surviving parents must also meet certain income eligibility requirements.

CAO Role in DIC

At the appropriate time, set up an appointment at the local DVA office and accompany the NOK to the meeting. Assist the NOK in filing the application for DIC. The required form is **VA Form 21-534a—Application for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation by a Surviving Spouse or Child**.

The Department of Veterans Affairs has regional representatives—DVA CAOs—who work closely with Army CAOs to expedite the process.

As soon as you file the **VA Form 21-534a**, the DVA will fax it to Philadelphia, where all DIC requests are processed for families of Soldiers who have died on Active Duty.

Transitional Benefit

VA also adds a transitional benefit of \$250 to the surviving spouse's monthly DIC if there are children under age 18. It is paid for two years from the date that entitlement to DIC commences, but is discontinued earlier when there is no child under age 18 or no child listed on the surviving spouse's DIC application for any reason.



Note: At times, the sole surviving parents of Soldiers residing overseas can still be entitled to parental DIC.

SURVIVOR'S BENEFIT PLAN (SBP)

The Survivor's Benefit Plan provides an immediate monthly annuity to the qualified survivor of a service member who dies while on active duty. SBP provides eligible surviving Family members financial security similar to the financial security enjoyed by a retiree—a cost-of-living-adjusted monthly income for life.

Eligible Beneficiaries

Eligible beneficiaries include the following:

- Former Spouse Only (if ordered in divorce decree, this option takes precedence over other options by law);
- Spouse;
- Child(ren) Only – Spouse Excluded; or Child(ren) – By law (no spouse);
- Person with insurable interest.

Payment to a “person with insurable interest” is only possible in the absence of a spouse, eligible children, or former spouse with court-ordered SBP. The person with insurable interest must be a dependent of the Soldier not otherwise eligible for SBP, either holding a dependent ID card or authorized to receive a dependent ID card.

Amount of Benefit

The amount of the benefit is based on the following:

- Line of duty (LOD) determination for non-retirement eligible service members. If the LOD determination is “yes,” eligible survivors will receive an SBP benefit. If the LOD determination is “no,” there is no SBP benefit if the Soldier was not retirement eligible; and
- Grade/Rank and years of service.

CAO Role in SBP

You will be assisting the NOK to apply for the SBP. Your CAC will provide you with the SBP “Smart Book,” which describes the program in detail. But remember—don’t use this information to counsel the NOK yourself. The SBP program has a lot of rules. The installation’s Retirement Services Officer (RSO) will explain the program in detail to the NOK. RSOs are trained and experienced in SBP counseling and assisting survivors.

Contact Retirement Services Officer (RSO)

Most importantly, contact the Retirement Services Officer within 10 days of the duty appointment. The earlier you introduce yourself to the RSO, the better.

Complete Worksheets and Counseling Checklist

Complete the SBP Beneficiary Worksheet and the Counseling Checklist and submit these to the RSO before the briefing. To do this, review available records, such as DEERS, personnel records, **DD Form 93**, the SGLI election, and so on. The CAC will assist you in obtaining this information.

The RSO has a lot of preparation to do, so continue to communicate with the RSO to determine when the RSO is ready to brief the NOK.

Accompany the NOK to the Briefing

You will accompany the NOK to the RSO briefing. If a personal visit to the RSO is not possible due to distance, a telephone briefing will be scheduled and you will be present with the NOK at the time of the call.

Calculation of Benefit

The RSO will make a final calculation of the benefit and brief the NOK. Once the briefing is complete and the NOK has made an election, witness their signature on the Spouse Statement of Desired Election. Provide the originals of the documents to the CAC and provide the NOK with a copy.

SERVICEMEMBERS’ GROUP LIFE INSURANCE (SGLI)

SGLI is a program of low-cost group life insurance for servicemembers on active duty, purchased by DVA from a commercial life insurance company. You will assist the beneficiary of the SGLI to complete the claim form: **SGLV-8283A** (Claim for Death Benefits).

Remember that the beneficiary might not always be the PNOK. Beneficiaries are listed on **SGLV Form 8286**. CMAOC simultaneously certifies SGLI beneficiaries by e-mailing the certified **Report of Casualty (DD Form 1300)** to the Office of Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance (OSGLI). Army policy requires that a letter be sent to the PNOK if the Soldier has elected less than maximum coverage to be provided to the PNOK. If this is the case, you may not share the name of any other beneficiary with the PNOK.

The form is sent to OSGLI. (See: <http://www.insurance.va.gov/sgliSite/SGLI/SGLI.htm>.)

Once a claim is settled, OSGLI will mail complete information with payment of proceeds.

CAOs should help NOK with SBP by:

- Contacting Retirement Services Officer (RSO)
- Completing worksheets and counseling checklist
- Accompanying NOK to RSO briefing
- Assisting NOK with completing documents

CLAIM FOR FAMILY COVERAGE DEATH BENEFITS <small>(Servicemembers’ Group Life Insurance Family Coverage)</small>
PART I - INFORMATION CONCERNING DECEASED
1. Name of Deceased (first, middle, last)
SGLV-8283A

Child Beneficiaries

When children are named as beneficiaries, proof of guardianship of the child's estate is required. The insurance is held if there is no designated guardian of the child's estate. (AR 600-8-1, 12-18e) This guardianship is different from custody or guardianship of the child and it is provided by the county where the child resides.

Beneficiary Financial Counseling Services

Beneficiary Financial Counseling Services (BFCS) is an extra benefit offered for two years to beneficiaries of SGLI, Veterans' Group Life Insurance, and TSGLI policies.

FAMILY SGLI

The VA also offers Family Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (FSGLI) to the spouse of members insured under the SGLI program. FSGLI provides up to a maximum of \$100,000 of insurance coverage for spouses, not to exceed the amount of SGLI the insured member has in force.

The spouse has 120 days from the date of the Soldier's death to convert the policy to a commercial policy.

TRAUMATIC SERVICEMEMBERS' GROUP LIFE INSURANCE (TSGLI)

Traumatic Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (TSGLI) provides financial assistance to service members during their recovery period from a serious traumatic injury (up to \$100,000).

To qualify, a member must have suffered the traumatic injury prior to midnight of the day he or she was separated from the uniformed services.

The member must suffer a *scheduled loss* within 730 days of the traumatic injury. A scheduled loss is one included in a list of eligible injury types.

If a Soldier survives seven days after incurring a traumatic injury and qualifying loss, the NOK may apply for TSGLI benefits.

The VA provides one year of free financial counseling for all SGLI proceeds recipients. A member is automatically enrolled in TSGLI if they are enrolled in SGLI—the cost is an additional \$1 per month. (Reference: 600-8-1, 12-37 Program description)

CAO Role in Traumatic Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (TSGLI)

Assist the NOK to complete the application form. The application form and contact information is available at <https://www.hrc.army.mil/site/crsc/tsgli/eligibility.htm>

Claims can be faxed to 1-866-275-0684, e-mailed to TSGLI@conus.army.mil, or mailed to:

Department of the Army
Traumatic SGLI (TSGLI)
200 Stovall Street
Alexandria, VA 22332-0470

OSGLI provides complete information with payment of proceeds.

THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN (TSP) AND SAVINGS DEPOSIT PROGRAM (SDP) CLAIMS

The CAC will contact the supporting Finance Office to determine if the deceased Soldier was contributing to TSP. If the Soldier was contributing, the CAO will assist the NOK in filling out **Form TSP-U-17**. This form with its instruction can be downloaded from <http://tsp.gov/cgi-bin/byteserver.cgi/forms/tsp-17.pdf>.

The CAO will ensure the form is completed and sent with a copy of the **Report of Casualty (DD Form 1300)** to:

TSP Death Benefits Processing Unit
Fairfax Post Office, DEDIS
P. O. Box 4450
Fairfax, VA 22038-9998
Phone: 877-968-3778

The completed form can also be faxed to 703-592-0170.

Savings Deposit Program (SDP) Claims

Soldiers who are serving outside the United States or its possessions in designated combat zones can make deposits of unallotted current pay and allowances and earn interest. Amounts up to \$10,000 can be deposited with interest accruing at the rate of 10 percent per year.

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service—Cleveland (DFAS-CL) will determine if the deceased Soldier had an SDP account and process the account.

CAO Role in SDP Claims

Your role in assisting the NOK with SDP claims includes the following steps:

- Contact DFAS-Cleveland. Identify yourself as the CAO and provide the deceased Soldier's full name and Social Security Number (SSN).
- If DFAS confirms that the Soldier had an SDP account, assist the NOK to complete **DD Form 1174**.
- E-mail or fax **DD Form 1174** to DFAS-Cleveland, at:
 - E-mail: **CCL-SDP@DFAS.mil**
 - Fax: 216-522-6924
 - Phone: 888-332-7411

Funds will be sent via Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to the beneficiary's account within 10 working days. More information about TSP and SDP is available at: **www.military.com**.

UNPAID PAY AND ALLOWANCES (UPPA)

When a Soldier dies, pay stops, but it is still owed. Unpaid pay and allowances include the following:

- 365 days of Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH);
- Unpaid leave, unpaid partial month base pay;
- Unpaid bonuses (as long as LOD determination is 'Yes');
- Reimbursement for incidentals.

The **DD Form 93** will indicate who is eligible to receive unpaid pay and allowances. If the information is not on the **DD Form 93**, then the order of precedence will apply, as listed in 10 USC 2271.

CAO Role in Unpaid Pay and Allowances

Your role in assisting the NOK to obtain unpaid pay and allowances includes the following:

- Assist in completing paperwork;
- Follow all procedures contained in the DFAS Casualty Assistance Officer Pocket Guide to Casualty Entitlements.

Standard Form 1174 is used for unpaid pay and allowances. When completed, the form is filed with DFAS-IN (DFAS-Indiana), Military Pay Operations, Central Casualty Cell. The phone numbers are 877-734-6202 or 317-510-7030.

Always provide copies to the CAC of all the forms you have faxed or mailed to any agency and be sure to write down the date you filed the claim in your CAO AAR. Later, when you've verified with the NOK that unpaid pay and allowances have been received, annotate the date in your daily staff journal, **DA Form 1594**, and your CAO AAR.

If these entitlements are not processed in a timely manner (i.e., within 30 days), the CAC will assist in tracking their status and identifying reasons for delay.

HOUSING AND TRANSPORTATION

The spouse and children of a deceased service member living in government quarters are entitled either to remain in government housing for up to one year, or to relocate to private quarters and receive up to a year of Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH).

The Army usually pays BAH to managers of privatized housing when the Soldier is alive, but after the Soldier's death, the Army pays the spouse in one lump sum. The BAH will be at the rate the Soldier was drawing at the time of death. The spouse must continue to pay BAH if he or she is in privatized housing. BAH will always go to the authorized Family member residing in government quarters or for whom the Soldier is receiving the BAH entitlement.

The next of kin is responsible for coordinating movement of their household goods, including one POV, with the local transportation office.

Basic Allowance for Housing

If the survivor leaves the housing before the 365th day, he or she will be reimbursed for the unused days.

If the Family members are not occupying government housing, they may receive BAH or an overseas housing allowance for 365 days after the member's death.

TRICARE

The eligibility and benefits for TRICARE include the following:

TRICARE Medical

Eligible Family members of Active Duty members who died while on Active Duty, who were on Active Duty for at least 30 days before death, will receive TRICARE medical benefits equal to those of an Active Duty Family member (ADFM), including rates, fees, priority for appointments at a military treatment facility (MTF), and eligibility for programs that are ADFM-specific. After three years, they will receive benefits at the retiree Family member rate.

Children will receive medical benefits at the Active Duty Family member rate until the age of 21 (23 if full time student at an institution of higher learning).

If the spouse remarries someone outside the uniformed services, they are no longer covered.

TRICARE Dental

Regarding the TRICARE Dental Plan, if the Soldier participated in the dental plan at the time of his or her death, coverage for enrolled Family members will be extended for three years following the death.

During this three-year period, the government pays 100% of the premiums. After the three-year period, Family members may be eligible for the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program.

Enrollment

Enrollment for TRICARE occurs at TRICARE offices, which are located at most military hospitals. The information toll-free number is 800-363-2273.

You must be enrolled in the Defense Enrollment Eligibility Reporting System—DEERS—to be eligible for TRICARE.

Assist the NOK to make sure they are in the DEERS system.

SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS

The Social Security Administration (SSA) provides a \$255 one-time death benefit. In addition to this one-time death benefit, Social Security benefits are payable to eligible survivors of deceased Soldiers if survivors meet the following requirements:

- Widow or widower of the deceased Soldier at any age if he or she has care of a natural or legally adopted child under 16 or a disabled child.
- Widow or widower (who remains unmarried) on reaching age 60. (Remarriage prior to age 60 causes loss of entitlement.)
- Surviving divorced husband or wife at age 60 if he or she was married to the Soldier for at least 10 years.
- Surviving divorced mother or father who is not married and has in care a natural or legally adopted child who is under age 16 and entitled to social security benefits on the Soldier's record.
- Dependent parents on reaching age 62 if they were receiving at least one-half of their support from the deceased Soldier (VA IS-1 Fact Sheet).
- Children receive social security benefits until the age of 18 (19 if secondary school student). (AR 600-8-1, Appendix F-1)

CAO Role in Social Security Benefits

To assist the NOK in receiving Social Security benefits, contact the Social Security Immediate Claim Processing Unit (ICTU) in Philadelphia, PA (Toll Free: 866-777-7887).

CMAOC will provide the **Report of Casualty (DD Form 1300)** directly to the Social Security Administration (SSA).

The CAO or surviving Family member's call to this toll-free number will eliminate the need to visit a SSA field office for processing of benefits. Temporary benefits will commence pending the submission of required evidence from the

TRICARE Information Phone Number

800-363-2273

surviving Family member, usually within 24 hours. Supporting documentation, such as Marriage, Death, and Birth Certificates, will be required to be submitted within 60 days.

MILITARY ID CARD

New military ID cards are issued for an unremarried widow/widower. This is necessary to receive various benefits.

The NOK must complete **DD Form 1172—Application for Uniformed Services Identification DEERS Enrollment Card**. Prior to accompanying the NOK to the closest ID Card office, ensure an appointment is made with the Military ID Card Office supervisor. Office locations may be found at www.dmdc.osd.mil/rsl.

Ensure the Soldier's spouse brings an official copy of the **DD Form 1300 (Report of Casualty)** to the issuing facility. For minor children not residing with the Soldier's spouse, if already enrolled in DEERS, ensure the guardian brings guardianship documents along with the **DD Form 1300**.

Unfortunately a widow/er will need to be prepared for their status to change and the word "URW" (Unremarried Widow/er) to appear on their card. They will also still be using their spouse's social security number as identification.

RECEIVING THE PERSONAL EFFECTS

The NOK will be eager to receive their loved one's personal effects (PE). For theater cases, you will receive the PE from the Joint Personal Effects Depot (JPED), then deliver them to the Person Eligible to Receive the Effects (PERE). A Summary Court Martial Officer (SCMO) is appointed to collect, inventory, and safeguard the Soldier's PE.

Person Eligible to Receive Effects (PERE)

The key person in this process is the PERE. The PERE is the person to whom the Army will deliver or ship personal effects. Remember—the PERE is not necessarily the PADD.

The PERE is determined by the SCMO who is appointed by the deceased Soldier's home

station CAC. The order of precedence used to determine the PERE is the following:

- Executor of the deceased Soldier's estate;
- Spouse;
- Child;
- A parent;
- Sibling;
- Other blood relative;
- A person standing in loco parentis; or
- A person named as a beneficiary in the will.

Usually, the spouse is the executor of the deceased Soldier's estate, but not always. If the parents are married, the eldest parent would be the PERE. If the parents were never married, the parent who had custody of the deceased Soldier would be the PERE.



Note: If the will is available to the SCMO, then an interested party can request a copy of the will from the SCMO to petition a civil court for appointment as the legal representative.

If there are any questions or issues regarding the PERE, the Human Resources Command can resolve them.

Return of Personal Effects

The following timeline describes the process of retrieving PE from the theater of combat operations casualty incident location. This is a best-case scenario, not necessarily a representative scenario. The PE are shipped to the CAO approximately 45 days from the date of the incident. The PE are sent from the theater of combat operations to the JPED in the United States.

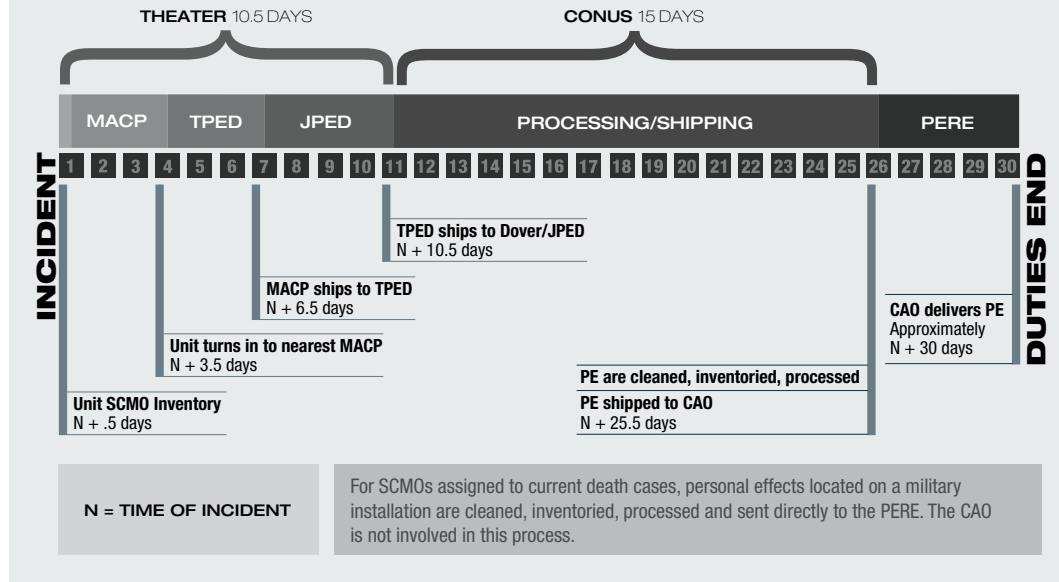
Joint Personal Effects Depot (JPED)

The JPED is the central facility in the CONUS for:

- Processing and cataloging PE; and
- Transferring custody to the PERE via the local CAO.

The JPED employs SCMOs from all services. These SCMOs are responsible for deciding which items of PE are preserved and which are destroyed. They ensure standardization of the PE processing.

RETURN OF PERSONAL EFFECTS



The PE are carefully cleaned, inventoried, cataloged, and reviewed. Each item is photographed. JPED can hold back certain items that might cause embarrassment to the deceased Soldier or have security implications. For example, sometimes ammo is found in the pockets of uniforms.



Note: The PERE may not want the PE cleaned. In this case, CMAOC sends a “wash” letter to the CAO. You have to find out if the PERE wants PE to be cleaned and, if so, return the letter to CMAOC within seven days.

After the PE are carefully processed, they are sent to you, after which you will deliver them to the PERE.

THE HEIRLOOM CHEST

The Army now provides each PERE with an heirloom chest in which the PERE can save the selected personal effects of their loved one. You will receive the Heirloom Chest from the JPED, in the case of an in-theater death, or the CAC, in the case of a non-theater death. When you receive the chest, unpack it and check for damages. If it's damaged, contact the CMOAC case manager. Contact the PERE to arrange delivery of the chest.

Use the script provided to you by the CAC.

Acronyms

N+.5 = 12 hours

MACP = Mortuary Affairs Collection Point

TPED = Theatre Personal Effects Depot

JPED = Joint Personal Effects Depot

PERE = Person Eligible to Receive Effects

SCMO = Summary Court Martial Officer

Rehearse what you are going to say before you deliver the chest. Have the PERE sign for delivery of the Chest, using DA Form 1076. After you complete delivery to the PERE, call the CAC.

FATAL TRAINING/ OPERATIONAL ACCIDENT BRIEF

If you are assigned as the CAO to the NOK of a Soldier killed in a training or operational accident, CMAOC will contact you within the first week to familiarize you with the Fatal Training/ Operational Accident Program. This program is mandated by the Chief of Staff of the Army.

The Investigation Process

When a Soldier dies as a result of a military training accident, operational accident, or friendly fire, the Army appoints an investigator

Remember, you represent the Army. You might be the last contact a Family has with the Army.

to conduct a collateral investigation (AR 15-6 investigation) into the accident.

When the report of that investigation is completed and approved by the General Court Martial Convening Authority (usually a GO or MACOM commander), the PNOK will be offered an opportunity for a face-to-face presentation on the facts and findings of the investigation. The General Court Martial Convening Authority strives to provide the report of the investigation to the PNOK before it is released to the general public. The PNOK will be offered a copy of the report.

The program is fully explained in Army Regulation AR 600-34, available at http://www.apd.army.mil/series_range_pubs.asp?range=600.

Applicability

The Fatal Training/Operational Accident Program and the briefing to the NOK relates only to military-related training and operational accidents and friendly fire incidents, not to families whose loved one died from hostile fire, homicide, self-inflicted wounds, or natural causes.

CAO's Role

You will provide periodic updates on the status of the collateral investigation. Explain any delays or provide an estimated timeframe for the conclusion of the investigation. You will continue to update the PNOK as you receive updates from CMAOC. As the liaison between the U.S. Army and the Family, convey these updates to the PNOK either in person or by telephone. Your CMAOC case manager will keep you apprised.

Formal Offer to Family

Once the report of findings from the investigation is signed by the approval authority, you will present a formal offer to the Family to determine whether they would like to receive a personal presentation, a copy of the investigative report, and a copy of the autopsy report. The PNOK will initial his/her choices and sign the bottom of the letter. You will fax the signed page back to CMAOC.

The Briefing

If the Family decides to receive the presentation, the Army will provide a briefer, usually a Colonel or higher in rank (first 0-6 in chain of command) to provide a thorough explanation of the findings of the investigation to the PNOK. You will coordinate a date and time for the presentation.

Usually the presentation is conducted in the Family's home for comfort, but some families prefer a chapel or a conference room on the nearest military installation or Reserve Center/National Guard Armory. It is up to the Family to select the location.

After the Family accepts the offer to conduct a briefing, you will provide a well-being report to the CMAOC case manager. This report is an e-mail from you outlining basic information about the Family. You should address their likes, dislikes, jobs, hobbies, children, grandchildren, religious preferences, current emotional state, any outstanding issues that need to be resolved, and any other general observations.

This will help the briefer plan how to approach the Family. The report can be in any format—the goal is to communicate key information to the briefer. Remember, this is a separate report from the checklist provided by the CAC.

The Family can invite whomever they choose to attend this presentation, but no travel funds are authorized for Family members. In addition to the briefer and the Family, the CMAOC representative, the chaplain and you the CAO, will also attend the presentation. The Family may also request the attendance of their Family pastor, rabbi, or priest. One of your duties as CAO is to coordinate attendance, if possible.

Advance notice is requested if members of the press or a lawyer will be present. The Army also needs to know whether an elected official will attend.

Language Issues

The Army will provide an interpreter or bilingual briefer if English is not the Family's primary language. The report can be translated as needed. Translator services will be coordinated by the affected CAC with CMAOC.

Rehearsing the Presentation

Rehearsals for the presentation are normally conducted the day prior or morning before the actual presentation with the briefer, the CMAOC representative, and the CAO. Uniform for rehearsal is casual. Uniform for the Family presentation will be Class A. This is to honor the deceased Soldier; however, if the Family is uncomfortable with uniforms, appropriate civilian attire is permitted.

Delivering the Presentation

The presentation can run as little as 45 minutes in length or go as long as needed. Average length of the presentation is about 2 to 2 1/2 hours.

The presentation is followed by a question and answer session. Questions may be asked throughout the presentation but most are left until the end.

Copy of Investigation Report

If the PNOK elects to receive a copy of the report, a redacted copy of the investigation will be given to the Family members at the end of the presentation. The briefer will explain that the “black outs” and missing data are in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act and Privacy Act restrictions. Federal law prohibits the release of personal information without written permission from the individual. In addition to these restrictions, other information may be withheld based on security or classification reasons.

Multiple Casualty Incident

In a multiple casualty incident, a Soldier’s Family will be asked not to discuss the investigation publicly until all the families involved have been given the opportunity to be briefed and receive the report. This is particularly important when the media has requested details of the incident. We owe it to our Army families to hear this information from us first, not from the media.

If the Family Declines the Presentation

If the Family declines the presentation but wishes to receive a redacted copy of the investigation, the unit Staff Judge Advocate will mail it to CMAOC with a letter explaining the redactions, and will include a letter of

endorsement from the brigade commander. CMAOC will mail it to the PNOK’s CAO who will deliver it to the PNOK. This package will be double wrapped. The first wrapping will be addressed to you, and the second envelope will be addressed to the Family. You will present the second envelope containing the investigation to the Family.

Sensitivity to the Grieving Process

As you assist the Family during this process, realize that even though months have passed, the Family will most likely still be grieving. Each Family reacts differently to death and heals at a different rate. Based on the outcome of the investigation, be prepared for any reaction.

Anger, denial, and disbelief are common reactions, especially among those families that have not yet accepted the fact of their loss. Other families heal faster and have a different outlook. They accept that what happened cannot be changed, and once they hear all the circumstances, they can perhaps experience closure and move on with the healing process.

Remember, you represent the Army. You might be the last contact a Family has with the Army. Maintain a professional demeanor at all times during the presentation process.

Summary of Actions

- Review AR 600-34 for a full explanation of the program.
- Present the formal offer of presentation to the PNOK. Ensure that the PNOK selects yes or no for all of the options and signs the offer.
- Fax or email the signed offer back to CMAOC.
- Prepare a “PNOK Well-being Report” with information about the Family.
- Coordinate Family participation at the briefing, including attendance by clergy.
- Attend the rehearsal presentation with the briefer and CMAOC representative.
- Attend the presentation as liaison between the Army and Family. Uniform is Class A.

CLOSING OUT THE CASE **Requesting Official Reports**

One aspect of closing out the case is to assist the NOK to request official reports, including

the following:

- Line of Duty Investigations
- Autopsy Reports
- Criminal Investigative Division Reports
- Safety Investigation Reports

Line of Duty Report of Investigation

The death of a Soldier requires a Line of Duty (LOD) determination, which may include an investigation. When a Soldier's death is due to natural causes, a LOD Report of Investigation is not required. If a LOD Report of Investigation is required, it is normally received at CMAOC approximately 60 to 90 days after the date of death. Assist the NOK to draft a request to AHRC and make sure they sign it. The NOK or you can mail the request along with a copy of a picture ID card to:

Army Human Resources Command
ATTN: Freedom of Information
(AHRC-TQM)
200 Stovall St.
Alexandria, VA 22332

Autopsy Report

The Armed Forces Medical Examiner (AFME) performs autopsies on Soldiers who die in the theater of operations and in some overseas locations. In most cases a final report will be issued in approximately 60–90 days. A copy of the final report is available upon request. You can assist the NOK to draft a request for a copy of the final report. Make sure it is signed and is accompanied by a copy of **DD Form 1300** and a picture ID. Forward the request by fax or mail to:

The Office of the Armed Forces
Medical Examiner
1413 Research Blvd.
Rockville, MD 20850
Fax: 301-319-0635

For Soldiers who died outside a combat operations area, assist the NOK in obtaining the autopsy report from the location where the autopsy was performed.

Criminal Investigation Division (CID) Report

CID will complete a Report of Investigation when the death of a Soldier or a Soldier's dependent occurred on post and the cause of death is unnatural (homicide, suicide, or resulting from trauma of undetermined origin). You will draft the request for a copy of the CID

Report and mail it to:

Director, U.S. Army Crime Records Center
USACIDC, ATTN: CICR-FP
6010 6th Street
Fort Belvoir, VA 22060-5585

Safety Investigation Report

If a Soldier dies as a result of an accident involving Army equipment or operations, two investigations will be conducted. Safety personnel will conduct an investigation for accident prevention purposes within the Department of Defense (DoD), under the provisions of AR 385-40. The NOK may request copies of this report. All requests for this report must be in writing and should be sent to:

CDR, U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center
Freedom of Information Act
5th Avenue, Building 4905
Fort Rucker, AL 36362–5363

This report is usually not available until 120 to 180 days after the accident. Reports of safety investigations may not be released, even to the NOK, by either the local safety office or the Soldier's chain of command; they can only be released by the U.S. Army Combat Readiness Center. A separate administrative investigation, known as the collateral investigation, is conducted on all fatal Army accidents. This is discussed in the section on Fatal Training/Operational Accident Brief in this Guide.

AFTER ACTION REPORT

Your CAO After Action Report, duty log, and all case-related documents must be submitted to the CAC at the 60-day point. Interim AARs are submitted every 30 days until you are released from your assignment. After 60 days from the date of case assignment, if the person you are assisting is not receiving the expected benefits or entitlements, inform the CAC. The CAC will follow up with the agency responsible for processing the benefit or entitlement.

Although your principal duties as CAO are completed, make sure that before your departure, you have provided the primary next of kin with complete telephone contact numbers for the CAC and the Long Term Family Case Management program [1-866-272-5841 (toll free)].

Advise the primary next of kin to call the CAC for further assistance, if required, and to report any changes in the primary next of kin's telephone number and address.

When there are no outstanding issues (PE have been returned to the PERE, the Fatal Training/Operational Accident Presentation, if applicable, has been completed, and so on), file your completed Final After Action Report within five working days of your final action.

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE OFFICER (CAO) AFTER ACTION REPORT (ACTIVE DUTY DECEASED)

By this time in the process, you may have grown close to the Family of the Soldier and may have internalized their grief. As the section on Grief and Bereavement describes, the experience will affect you emotionally, perhaps more than you are aware.

Do not hesitate to get help, if you believe you need it. Available resources include the following:

- Local chaplain
- Military One Source
 - 800-342-9647
 - <http://www.militaryonesource.com/skins/MOS/home.aspx>
- Local Installation Resources.

More information about grief and bereavement is contained in the next section of this Guide.

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE OFFICER (CAO) AFTER ACTION REPORT (ACTIVE DUTY DECEASED)	
Part One	
CAO's Name: _____	Date briefed by the CAC: _____
Deceased's Rank/Name: _____	Social Security Number _____
Unit and Station: _____	Date of Interview: _____
After Action Report	

Grief and Bereavement

Grief Reactions

- Shock
- Disbelief
- Panic
- Anger
- Guilt
- Intense Grief

INTRODUCTION

This section provides you with some information about grief and bereavement, so that you can help NOK suffering from the loss of a loved one. Whether you perform casualty notification duties or casualty assistance duties, your presence, support, and strength will offer critical support to the NOK.

THE GRIEF AND BEREAVEMENT PROCESS

Grief is how we react to the loss of a loved one. Bereavement, or mourning, is the process of “working through” the grief—that is, of adapting emotionally and cognitively to the loss or absence of a loved one.

The key point is that grief and bereavement is not an event—it’s a normal and natural process. All humans experience loss—bereavement is how we adjust to loss. It can be a relatively mild process or very intense.

The grief and bereavement process can take months or even years to complete. Sometimes, the survivors of a deceased person *never* stop grieving. Although the course of grieving differs with each person, there are some common stages. Grief has a beginning, a middle, and usually an ending.

If you’ll be performing **casualty notification** duties, the most important aspect of grief will be the beginning of the process—how loved ones react to the notification...and what you can do to help.

GRIEF REACTIONS TO THE NOTIFICATION

The grieving process begins with the reaction to the notification.

Upon hearing of the sudden death of a loved one, the NOK may display a wide range of reactions: shock, disbelief, confusion, numbness, anger, guilt, and even panic. You can expect any combination of these reactions. In many cases, their initial reaction may be shock and confusion, making it difficult to process any information for awhile. Some survivors will respond with disbelief, arguing with the CNO as they attempt to make sense of what has happened.

With each reaction, it is important that you acknowledge the survivor’s grief, remain calm, and ensure a safe environment.

Responding to Grief Reactions

Shock

NOK who initially react with intense shock may appear dazed, spaced out or in a trance. They may seem unable to hear you or to respond to others around them. If this happens, it is best to interrupt the notification and slowly help the survivor to become more aware of you and their surroundings. Offer them a glass of water, calmly repeat their name and ask them how they are feeling. Once it appears that you have regained their attention, you can continue with the notification.

Those in shock may appear to be numb and robotic. This does not mean that they don’t care or that they haven’t heard or understood what you have told them. This immediate numbness may help them manage their grief and shock so that they don’t become overwhelmed by it. The NOK may also respond by suddenly becoming aimlessly busy. They may frantically begin cleaning the house. This is another way that they can deal with their grief.

Panic

In contrast to shock or numbness, those who respond with panic are experiencing an intense sense of fear or helplessness. They may experience the death of their loved one as a personal threat to their own life and future. Panic can cause physical reactions such as a racing heart, shortness of breath, dizziness, sweating, and shaking. These reactions may in turn cause the person to feel more afraid and upset.

If the NOK reacts in panic, the highest priority is to help them calm down. Have them sit in a comfortable chair; guide them to slow their breathing by slowly counting and breathing yourself. If they complain of dizziness, suggest that they place their head between their knees and breathe slowly until the dizziness subsides.

If the survivor faints either immediately upon hearing the news or as a result of hyperventilating, call 911 for assistance. Although some survivors may feel calmed by being touched on the shoulder, hand or arm, some may be made more upset by physical contact. Try to be aware of the NOK's wishes by allowing "room to breathe" to those who need it. The most effective way to calm a panicking survivor is to appear calm yourself.

Anger

Some NOK will become angry upon first hearing the news. Fear, helplessness, and guilt can all lead to anger. Although this anger may appear to be directed at you, it is important to remember that you are not the cause of their distress. Anger is a normal part of the grieving process and is not necessarily always directed at the person or circumstance that deserves it. If this situation occurs, do not take it personally. Just be sensitive to the circumstances and be prepared to give the Family space.

As in dealing with NOK who are panicking, the best way to manage anger reactions is to remain calm. Speak directly but in a quiet voice. Survivors who are not posing any danger to themselves or others should be allowed to express their anger. You can indicate your acceptance by nodding but not saying anything—this may help them to more calmly talk about their feelings.

If a survivor's anger appears to be escalating or he/she becomes violent, first ensure your safety by immediately stepping away from the individual. Set direct limits in a strong but quiet voice. Do not engage in physical contact with an angry survivor. Call 911 if the situation gets out of hand and contact the CAC afterwards.

Guilt

Although feelings of guilt may cause outbursts of anger, guilt can also be expressed in self-blaming statements, such as "I never should have encouraged him to join the Army." Do not debate the truth of these statements with the NOK. Instead, help them to turn their thoughts toward honoring their loved one with statements such as "Your son died honorably," or "You should be very proud of your son." Be aware that those who exhibit extreme guilt are at risk for suicide and you should inform the CAC about the NOK's reaction so that they can make an appropriate referral.

Intense Grief

Some survivors may seem to have lost control, screaming and crying or even falling to the ground in extreme expressions of grief. For some, this is culturally appropriate and should be honored. For others, this outpouring is an initial response that will soon subside. After allowing time for this initial reaction, assist the NOK to calm down. Physical contact on the wrist, shoulder or arm may be appropriate but be sensitive to the survivor's signals and be sure to provide space when it's needed. Hugging and other more intimate gestures are never appropriate.

If the NOK appears unable to regain control and does not respond to your support, or if the NOK is attempting to or threatening to harm themselves, first contact the local authorities by dialing 911 and inform the CAC.

Unhelpful Responses to Grief

There are several responses that are unhelpful to the NOK. Be sure to avoid the following:

- A casual or passive attitude;
- Statements that the death is in any way for the best or acceptable (e.g., “He/she is in a better place,” or “It’s God’s will.”);
- An assumption that the bereaved is strong and will/should get through this; or
- Any kind of avoidance of discussion of the death or of the person who died.

Focusing on the Facts

In your concern with easing the NOK’s grief, don’t be tempted to provide any information beyond what’s in the casualty report. Focus on the facts. Assure the NOK that as more information becomes available, he or she will receive it. Survivors often want reassurance and therefore seek more information than you might have. But the simple facts will guide the grief experience better. Patiently allow the person to begin the grieving process, rather than speculating or intellectualizing about details.

Physical Touching

Use physical contact very sparingly and only if the NOK seems comforted by it. Never offer any intimate gestures such as hugging.

Suicide Risk

If it appears that the NOK is at risk of hurting themselves or anyone else, immediately call 911 and contact your CAC. Do not leave the survivor on his/her own without support.

Reactions to the Notification – Summary

In summary, there are a variety of different ways that the NOK may respond after hearing about the death of a loved one. With each reaction, it is important that you:

- Acknowledge the survivor’s grief;
- Remain calm and ensure a safe environment;
- Use physical contact only if the NOK appears comforted by it and do not touch a survivor who is responding with anger;
- Do not offer an intimate gesture such as hugging.

If a NOK is at risk for hurting herself/himself or someone else, immediately contact local authorities through 911 and inform the CAC. Remember—take all threats of self-harm seriously.

The Presence of Children

The decision about whether children should be present during notification should always be up to the NOK. If children are present, ask to speak to the NOK in private but respect their wishes if they prefer that you share the news in front of the children.

Children who are present during the notification will have varied reactions, depending on their age and maturity, relationship to the deceased, and prior experience with loss. Children can react in a variety of ways, depending upon their age. They can express guilt or fear by stating that they are somehow responsible for the death. They may cling to the NOK and cry if asked to leave their side. They may become angry, have a temper tantrum or attempt to hit someone or throw things.

Children will also react to the level of distress displayed by the NOK. In situations where the NOK is feeling overwhelmed or distraught, he or she may need some help caring for the children. If the NOK becomes extremely distressed and there are children in need of immediate attention, ask if you can contact a nearby friend or relative to care for the children.

Children may become highly active, talking non-stop, interrupting conversations, asking questions, or running around the room. The NOK may ask for advice on how to communicate with the children. The guidance depends on the age of the children. Some suggestions include the following:

- Communicate with the child at his or her eye level.
- Use language the child can understand and be honest without providing unnecessary detail. Use clear, concise, and concrete terms to explain the world “dead.” For example: “your father was shot and he died.”
- Ask them questions to make sure they understand what you have told them. Do not assume the child totally understands.

- Answer all of their questions honestly; it is okay to say ‘I don’t know’ to questions that have no known answers.
- Provide reassurance that they themselves are safe and will not be harmed.

Children will often express their feelings through play; therefore, providing them with familiar toys to express their feelings is helpful as well as art supplies to draw pictures of their loved one.

Cultural Differences

Cultural differences may influence how Family members react to hearing the news. Those from some cultures may tend to be more reserved in their emotional expressiveness while other groups may react with very strong emotions. Neither is correct or incorrect; either kind of reaction is acceptable within their respective cultures.

There are also differences in how you may be received at the home. In some cultures, such as Asian-American, showing hospitality is very important and you may be offered food and drink. Accept what is offered to avoid insulting the Family.

Cultures vary in their taboos and rituals related to death: how the body should be cared for, washed, and dressed prior to burial or cremation, as well as rituals associated with the funeral or ceremony. Although you’re not expected to become an expert in every culture or religion, you can demonstrate your sensitivity by not assuming that others follow your traditions. Respect the requests of the NOK and allow each Family to respond in their own way.

Avoid appearing to be judgmental. Sometimes this is not easy since we may not realize when we’re conveying a judgment or offensive message. Avoid statements about a cultural practice such as “That’s strange, I’ve never heard of that before.”

Acknowledge the Family’s concerns, with statements such as “Thank you for letting me know your concerns. I will share these with the CAO and we will do our best to address them.” It may be helpful to write down their concerns; these indicate that you’re taking them seriously.

Be aware that within some cultures, it is considered disrespectful to question an authority figure, including yourself. Therefore, if the NOK is silent or appears reluctant to question you, ask them directly if they have any questions or concerns. You may also ask if there is someone you can contact from their religious faith or immediate and extended Family members.

THE LONG-TERM GRIEVING PROCESS

As a CAO, you will be interacting with the NOK as he or she experiences various stages in the long-term bereavement process. You will observe how the NOK attempts to cope with grief. The first few months are the most intense in the grieving process.

Understand that grief is associated with physical symptoms. Headaches, backaches, related pains, are warning signs of grief.

Stages in the Process

In general, the long-term process has a beginning, a middle, and a resolution. The beginning is the initial reaction to the death. As we’ve mentioned, this can vary greatly. The second stage includes the NOK’s attempt to “work through” their grief.

For most people, this stage eventually transitions into recovery, healing, and acceptance of the death. But this does not often begin until at least one year after the death.

As a CAO, your strength, support and active presence can help the NOK as they strive to work through the healing process toward resolution.

Anger

Anger is a part of grief and you may encounter it throughout the grieving process. Often, the anger is directed at you mainly because you are a ready target and represent the Army. Expect anger and be aware that it’s not really directed at you.

Traumatic Grief and Depression: Warning Signs

Sometimes, “normal grief” can become traumatic grief and depression. A deepening clinical depression is much more severe than “normal” grief. A person suffering from traumatic grief and/or depression will be depressed and sad every day, all the time. They will lose interest in normal activities. They will experience appetite changes, problems sleeping, problems concentrating. They will express constant pessimism and possibly be preoccupied with suicide.

As a CAO, be alert to these warning signs. If you notice them, try to encourage the survivor to seek professional help.

The Healing Process

At about the three to six-month point in the grieving process, the grieving person will hopefully begin to heal. They’re less overwhelmed by the loss, sleep better, their appetite has returned, and their general ability to function has improved. They are less occupied with the loss of the loved one. They can think about the loved one without being overwhelmed. They are able to function again and resume normal activities. They have accepted the loss and are on the road to recovery.

Communication Issues/Roadblocks

It’s important to focus on how you communicate with survivors who are undergoing the bereavement process.

No matter how many families you’ve worked with, each will be different and will react differently to the same situations. Let the Family guide you in responding to their needs.

Even if you have experienced the death of a loved one, don’t always refer back to your own experience while working with the Family.

The death of a loved one is hard for anyone to deal with. Statements such as, “Everything will be alright” or, “Don’t worry, you still have your kids,” may not be comforting to the Family. Instead, simply acknowledge their pain.

Especially in the early days of grief, the Family may need help with certain tasks. As time goes on, it is important for them to adjust to their new life circumstances. Help them with tasks, but don’t do the tasks for them.

Practical Concerns When Dealing with a Grieving Family

Communication

When the Family’s first or primary language is not English, they may be comfortable in verbal conversation, but uncomfortable reading or doing paperwork or vice versa. A trained interpreter may be helpful.

Economic Stability

The deceased individual may have been the sole wage-earner. Financial security (or insecurity) directly affects the grief process.

Status of Military Benefits

Survivors can suffer “information and decision fatigue,” and most Family members are not accustomed to the relative complexity of the benefits and entitlements process. Be prepared to state key information, paraphrase it, and restate it. You may have to repeat and re-explain the same information several times.

Deployment and Return Schedule Changes

During a scheduled deployment, Family members and friends often become accustomed to the absence of their loved one. After a death occurs, the reality of the situation may not hit the Family until the deceased Soldier’s unit returns to the base without the loved one.

Cause of Death

This is a major factor in dealing with grief. Whether the death is perceived as meaningful, senseless, appropriate, or untimely can create significant differences in the grief process.

The nature of the death may have been so traumatic that the remains may not be suitable for viewing. The passage of time and recovery time of the body may prohibit viewing. There may have been dying wishes of the deceased that lead to a non-viewable situation.

Some people want/need information and details; others do not. People will often push for additional information and details you do not have. After a given amount of time they may fabricate information to fill the void. Validating and clarifying information may become a major part of your role.

Self-Care for CNOs and CAOs

As a CNO or CAO, you can and most likely will be deeply affected by contact with the survivor. The type of bond that can form, either with a CNO or a CAO, can be deep and lasting and the experience will affect you in ways that you might not even be aware of.

You may develop a deep attachment to the Family. In fact, the CNO may feel responsible for hurting the Family simply by delivering the notification. You may even take on the burden of the grieving person. You may feel responsible for damaging the Family members, either by the news you conveyed, or by your attempts to comfort the survivor(s) in the weeks and months you interact with them. You may experience any combination of the following warning signs:

- Withdrawing from your usual activities;
- Irritability;
- Problems eating and/or sleeping;
- Preoccupation with your CNO or CAO duty;
- A sense of being “burned out.”

If you experience such warning signs, realize that you might need help. Talk to your chaplain, or to anyone you trust. Brief your supervisors. Let people know how you feel. You can also consult professional help, using the sources mentioned elsewhere in this Guide.

SUMMARY

Grief and bereavement are not events; they’re part of a normal and natural process. It’s a process that the NOK is responsible for going through. No one else can do it for them. But you can help in a number of ways:

- You provide your undivided attention for however long it takes to assist the NOK.
- You offer strength and reassurance.
- You provide NOK with resources and connections to information.
- You help them prepare for grieving rituals, such as the funeral.
- You offer essential post-funeral assistance by being diligent, caring, and dependable—you do what you say you will do. And you follow through.

If you can achieve these goals, you will be able to truly demonstrate the Army’s warrior ethos: never leaving a fallen comrade behind and never abandoning the families of those who made the ultimate sacrifice for our nation.

Special Sections

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE IN DUSTWUN (DUTY STATUS WHEREABOUTS UNKNOWN) CASES

Introduction

The purpose of this section is to ensure that the Family of a Soldier who is classified as DUSTWUN (Duty Status Whereabouts Unknown) receives assistance from a CAO.

DUSTWUN is a temporary status that is used to allow the responsible commander sufficient time to investigate and determine a Soldier's status. It is important to note that the Soldier's pay and benefits do not change during this temporary status.

If after 24 hours of being unaccounted for, the Soldier's status is still unknown, the CAC will coordinate by telephone with the CMAOC for permission to submit a DUSTWUN report.

Appointment of CAO

When a Soldier has been declared as DUSTWUN, the CAC closest to the PNOK will appoint a CAO to assist the PNOK. The duties and responsibilities in a DUSTWUN case are time consuming and slightly different from normal casualty assistance because there are many unknowns that must be resolved.

Prepare for the Initial Visit

You will make the initial notification and provide updates to the NOK as CMAOC and the CAC provides them to you. Know exactly what is in the text of the initial notification message to the NOK. Obtain the casualty report information from the CAC, so that you can explain its contents to the NOK.

Media Coverage

Prepare yourself for media coverage of high-visibility cases and the concerns of the chain of command from the bottom to the top; your CAO duties may have a significant impact on the image of the Army.

Be prepared to answer the questions and concerns of the NOK and the media and address these questions and concerns with the local CAC and the CMAOC case manager.

Initial Visit

The initial visit will be difficult for you and the NOK. Try not to show any fear or misgivings because the NOK will be looking for strength, comfort, and guidance. Be careful not to be too pessimistic. Remain objective in whatever is said or done during the visit.

Although the NOK has two concerns (the Soldier's fate and his or her own position), it is wise to discuss the Soldier's fate first. Relate the fact that an investigation is ongoing to determine the status of the unaccounted for Soldier. Point out that there are four possible outcomes of the investigation: AWOL, Deserter, Missing, or Deceased. Each can be addressed as appropriate.

Dealing with Information

The NOK will have numerous questions and concerns. Remember, they are also watching television. Also keep in mind that the Soldier's disappearance is under investigation. Do your best to explain what you know to the NOK. For them, "not knowing" is the worst part. DUSTWUN is sometimes a more difficult and traumatic situation than a death. Emotions will be running high until the Soldier's status is confirmed.

There is not much more to add after discussing the DUSTWUN report. Because the NOK will probably still be in a state of dismay over the news, he or she may be unable “to discuss business.” After a few days, when the NOK has had a chance to regain composure, it will be easier to explain what must be done.

Media Inquiries

Inform the NOK that there is always the possibility that VIPs, such as members of Congress and/or their staffs, state and local public officials and/or their staffs, and representatives of the media, may ask for permission to call to express concern or seek interviews. Coordinate with the CAC to have a representative from the installation PAO accompany you to assist the NOK in responding to inquiries.

Immediate Financial Assistance

Provide information and/or assistance regarding financial matters. Reiterate that the Soldier’s financial situation does not change when he or she is DUSTWUN. Determine if the NOK needs any immediate financial assistance. If so, explain the services available through AER and the American Red Cross (ARC).

Casualty Assistance Referral Card

Provide the NOK with a Casualty Assistance Referral Card before you conclude the initial visit.

Relationship with the PNOK

From your first visit, work to develop trust and rapport with the NOK. Do not speak on subjects of which you have little knowledge or understanding. When you don’t have an answer, simply say so and advise the NOK that an answer will be forthcoming. Then get the answer from someone who does know and inform the NOK. Be willing to do everything you can within regulatory and statutory limits to assist the NOK but do not make promises you cannot keep. Otherwise, your credibility will be diminished.

Medical Care

The DEERS-enrolled NOK should be told that they are entitled to the same medical care as they were entitled to before the Soldier was classified DUSTWUN. Continued enrollment in DEERS is required.

Legal Assistance

Legal assistance is available to the PNOK through the Staff Judge Advocate’s office. It consists of advice on such matters as estate planning, income taxes, powers of attorney, wills, property damage/loss claims, the Soldiers and Sailors’ Civil Relief Act, and naturalization and citizenship. If the NOK needs this service, arrange an appointment.

After the First Meeting

Keep notes of the initial visit and all later visits on your **DD Form 1594**. Record only the most important items in the presence of the NOK. Other impressions and minor items can be recorded as soon as possible after the visit with the NOK; however, never sit in the car in front of the house making notes.

Fill out the **Casualty Assistance Officer After Action Report**. This form is a checklist of things to be done, serves as a record of completed actions, and identifies problem areas and actions taken.

Additional Visits and Contacts

Visit or be available to the NOK as much as necessary. It’s natural that the NOK will want constant updates. Provide these when available and inform the NOK that the U.S. Army is doing everything possible to learn the fate of the unaccounted for Soldier and that, as the CAO, you will immediately notify the NOK when further information is available.

Between visits, call the NOK daily to assure him or her of continuing interest and relate any additional information. Before each visit, call the CAC or CMAOC to get the latest status. Usually there will be no change, but by checking on the status you can ensure that the NOK is receiving the latest information.

Be prepared to provide a comprehensive briefing of what will occur if or when the Soldier is found, whether alive or deceased. Your CMAOC case manager will assist you in obtaining this information.

DUSTWUN is a temporary status that is used to allow the responsible commander sufficient time to investigate and determine a Soldier’s status.

After Completion of the Investigation

After the investigation is complete, visit the NOK to explain what will happen next. Refer to your CMAOC case manager for guidelines.

Subsequent Visits

Maintain contact with the NOK as long as the Soldier is in a DUSTWUN status. It may be a personal visit or a telephone contact. In any case, a periodic telephone call allows the Family an opportunity to “chat.” Always keep the CAC and your CMAOC case manager informed of visits and contact with the NOK.

Your overall duties as CAO will continue until the Soldier is recovered alive, determined missing, or found deceased, at which time you would continue both CAO and CNO responsibilities.

CASUALTY ASSISTANCE IN MISSING CASES

The purpose of this section is to ensure that the Family of a Soldier who has been declared missing by The Adjutant General (TAG) of the Army receives assistance from a CAO. The CAO represents the Secretary of the Army in assisting the NOK in every way possible during the time a Soldier is missing, captured, or other casualty status.

Definition of Missing

Although “missing status” is the term generally used, a missing Soldier may actually be one who is missing, missing in action, interned in a foreign country, captured, beleaguered, besieged by a hostile force, or detained in a foreign country against his or her will.

Prepare for the Initial Visit

Know exactly what is in the text of the initial notification message to the NOK. Obtain the casualty report information from the CAC, so that you can explain its contents to the NOK.

Media Coverage

You must prepare yourself for media coverage on high-visibility cases and how to respond to the media. Your CAO duties may have a significant impact on the image of the Army. Questions from the media should be referred to

the PAO. Be prepared for instantaneous media coverage of these high-visibility cases and the concerns of the chain of command from the bottom to the top.

Be prepared to answer the questions and concerns of the NOK. Provide daily reports on the questions and concerns of the NOK to your CMAOC case manager, CAC, and the local commander.

Sequence of Visits

The visits outlined below are only a guideline. Each PNOK will respond differently and may require more contact with the CAO (particularly in the case of a Soldier who is captured). The seven-day and 60-day visits are tied to events that take place as a result of a board convening to determine the Soldier’s status.

The timelines for the visit are not always followed, because sometimes the information needed to conduct the boards/hearings is not available in the timeline described. The boards are conducted if a hostile action caused the Soldier to be declared missing. In a non-hostile case, a hearing officer would be appointed rather than a board, but the timeline would generally be the same. Further information about this process can be provided by your CAC or by your CMAOC case manager.

First Visit to NOK

The initial visit will be difficult for both the CAO and the NOK. Try not to show any fear or misgivings because the NOK will be looking for strength, comfort, and guidance. Be careful not to be too pessimistic. Remain objective in whatever is said or done during the visit. Remember, you represent the Secretary of the Army; conduct yourself as a professional Soldier at all times.

The NOK will have numerous questions and concerns. Remember, they are also watching the television. If the action is under investigation, explain that these investigations are thorough and often time consuming.

Do not speak on subjects of which you have little knowledge or understanding. When you don’t know an answer to a question, simply

say so and advise the NOK that an answer will be forthcoming. Then get the answer from someone who does know and inform the NOK. Your CAC and your CMAOC case manager can assist you with obtaining answers. Be willing to do everything you can within regulatory and statutory limits. But do not make promises you cannot keep. Always follow through. Otherwise, your credibility will be diminished.

For the NOK, not knowing the status of their loved one is the worst of all. It is sometimes more difficult and traumatic than a death situation. Emotions will run high until the Soldier's status has been confirmed. If appropriate and available, have the CAC provide you (and the PNOK, if necessary) with a cell phone or pre-paid telephone calling card. In high-visibility cases, the cell phone will help you reach the NOK easier. Advise the NOK that the cell phone is for official use only.

Inform the NOK that there is always the possibility that VIPs, such as members of Congress and/or their staffs, state and local public officials and/or their staffs, and representatives of the media, may ask for permission to call to express concern or seek interviews. Coordinate with the CAC to have a representative from the installation PAO accompany you on the initial visit to provide guidance to the PNOK on media/external inquiries.

Dealing with Information

There is not much more to say after discussing the initial report. Since the NOK will probably still be in a state of dismay over the news, he or she may be unable "to discuss business." During the next few days the NOK will have a chance to regain composure; then it will be easier to explain what must be done.

It's natural that the NOK will want constant updates. Provide these when available and inform the NOK that the U.S. Army is doing everything possible to learn the fate of the missing Soldier and that, as the CAO, you will immediately notify the NOK when further information is available.

Casualty Assistance Referral Card

Make sure you provide the NOK with a Casualty Assistance Referral Card prior to leaving on this visit.

Immediate Financial Assistance

Provide information and/or assistance regarding financial matters. Reiterate that the Soldier's financial situation does not change when he or she is missing. Determine if the NOK needs any immediate financial assistance. If so, explain the services available through AER and the ARC.

After the Visit

Keep notes of the initial visit and all later visits in your **DD Form 1594**. Record only the most important items in the presence of the NOK. Other impressions and minor items can be recorded as soon as possible after the visit with the NOK; however, never sit in the car in front of the house making notes.

Fill out the relevant sections of the Casualty Assistance Officer After Action Report. This report serves as a record of completed actions and identifies problem areas and actions taken.

Four-Day Visit

This visit should occur within four days of the first visit.

Between the two visits, call the NOK daily to assure him or her of continuing interest and relate any additional information. Before the second visit, call the CAC and your CMAOC case manager to get the Soldier's latest status. Usually there will be no change, but by checking on the status, you can assure the NOK has the latest information.

During the second visit, the NOK may appear to be in a better emotional state, but still apprehensive about the uncertain situation. He or she may express deep concern not only for the Soldier's well-being, but may also have doubts and fears for their own well-being. Be prepared to allay these concerns with a smooth, forceful, and comprehensive briefing about what will occur during the next 60 days. Your CMAOC case manager can assist you in this effort.

A missing Soldier is one who is missing, missing in action, interred in a foreign country, captured, beleaguered, besieged by a hostile force, or detained in a foreign country against his or her will.

Although the NOK has two concerns (Soldier's fate and his or her own position), it is wise to discuss the Soldier's fate first. Explain that an investigation is ongoing and that a board of officers will convene at the Army Human Resources Command (AHRC) to make a recommendation on the facts surrounding the Soldier's missing status. Explain that this board reviews all the evidence presented for the sole purpose of making a recommendation. Gently point out the four possibilities—AWOL, Deserter, Missing, or Deceased.

A change in status from missing to deceased can occur only with supportive evidence. Inform the NOK that this investigation will take approximately 60 days, and that the results will be made available to them.

Seven-Day Visit

This visit should coincide with the NOK's receipt of the definitive notification letter from TAG, advising the NOK that a Missing Persons Board is being convened. However, if the letter isn't received by the seventh day, you can still discuss issues such as financial concerns.

Review the procedures outlined in the letter that the board will follow, the recommendations it may make, and the final action that may be taken. Be especially sympathetic to the needs of the NOK, because this letter will advise that a report of death may be a possibility. The NOK will have to wait approximately 60 days for the board's decision.

The NOK's second concern is his or her welfare, particularly regarding financial matters. You should provide the NOK with information on the financial matters that will affect him or her during the period the Soldier is classified as missing. This includes the following:

Continuation of financial support

- All pay and allowances earned before an absence continue to be credited to the Soldier's account.
- All allotments remain in effect and federal income tax relief continues if such relief was already in existence.

The Soldier specified on his or her **Record of Emergency Data (DD Form 93)** the percentage of monthly pay entitlements to be paid and to whom. The NOK will be informed that:

- The Secretary of the Army may alter the designated allotment in the best interests of the Soldier. These allotments are paid by check from Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) until the Soldier is returned to military control or declared deceased.
- Provisions exist whereby this allotment may be increased if satisfactory evidence shows that the NOK needs additional financial support.

Discuss finances with the NOK again after the Soldier has been missing for 30 days, because that is when DFAS will begin making payments stipulated by the Soldier.

The CAO should remind the NOK that emergency financial assistance may be available from AER or ARC. In this instance, the CAO should provide help to the NOK in requesting such assistance.

Personal Property

Inform the NOK that when the Soldier has been carried in a missing status for more than 29 days, the law provides for movement of the Soldier's personal property. If the Soldier is carried in a missing status for more than one year, the NOK may request authorization for an additional movement of the personal property. If the NOK intends to relocate or needs additional information, schedule a visit to the installation transportation office.

Housing

If the NOK is living in government-controlled quarters and the Soldier is missing in action, the Family will be allowed to continue to live in the quarters. At the end of one year and one day, a determination will be made on the Soldier's status. If the Soldier remains in a Missing In Action (MIA) status, the Family will be allowed to remain in the quarters until the Soldier's status changes due to further review or final determination.

If the Soldier is a POW, the Family will be permitted to continue to live in government quarters until the Soldier's status changes. At that time, it will be determined whether the Family is entitled to such quarters.

Medical Care

DEERS-enrolled NOK are entitled to the same medical care as they were entitled to before the Soldier was classified as missing. Continued enrollment in DEERS is required.

Legal Assistance

Legal assistance is available to NOK through the Staff Judge Advocate's office. It consists of advice on matters such as estate planning, income taxes, powers of attorney, wills, property damage/loss claims, the Soldiers and Sailors' Civil Relief Act, and naturalization and citizenship. If the NOK needs this service, arrange an appointment.

Department of Veterans Affairs/Social Security

Finally, assist the NOK with the entitlements and benefits that may be available from the VA. The VA regional office will explain the nature of these benefits while the Soldier is in a missing status.

No Social Security benefits are applicable to NOK when the sponsor is in a missing status.

Thirty-Day Visit

This visit is conducted after the Soldier has been missing for 30 days. The purpose is to review the financial status of the NOK to determine whether the first check from DFAS has been received and to assist in applying for a change in allotment authorization if the situation warrants.

Sixty-Day Visit

This visit should occur after the results of the Missing Persons Board are issued and the letter from the TAG has been provided to the NOK. The visit may not occur on day 60; it should occur whenever the NOK receives the TAG letter.

This letter will review all circumstances leading up to the Soldier's disappearance. It will summarize the Missing Persons Board proceedings and state of official status (AWOL, Deserter, Missing, or Deceased) of the Soldier by AHRC. This letter will stipulate that the Soldier's status is subject to review when more information is uncovered; or, if nothing is uncovered, the Soldier's status will have a mandatory review after one year.

The 60-day visit is very important for the NOK because it may mean that the Soldier will be retained in a missing status rather than declared dead. If so, the NOK's reaction will most likely be relief and hope—relief, due to the passage of an important milestone for which waiting was almost unbearable; and hope, because the Missing Persons Board could not uncover sufficient evidence to support a conclusion that the Soldier is dead. The visit is important to you as the CAO because it could mean assisting the NOK for an indefinite period.

If there is evidence that supports the conclusion that the Soldier could not still be alive, a presumptive finding of death may be rendered at that time.

Subsequent Visits

Maintain contact with the Family as long as the Soldier is in a missing status, either through personal visits or by telephone. In any case, always keep the CAC and your CMAOC case manager informed of visits and contact with the NOK.

Appendix A:

Casualty Assistance Officer Checklist

PREPARATION FOR CAO DUTY

1. Conduct General Research	
▪ Review Guide and Quickguide.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Review online training course.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Review regulations.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Conduct Case-Specific Research	
▪ Obtain information from CAC about NOK.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Get debrief from CNO and chaplain.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Verify current status of remains and circumstances of the death.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Contact the Retirement Services Officer (RSO) to schedule SBP counseling.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Obtain information on disposition of remains process.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Obtain information on disposition of personal effects process.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Review information on dealing with the media.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Contact legal assistance.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Verify posthumous citizenship eligibility.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Contact AER	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Obtain and Review Forms/Documents	
▪ Review Casualty Assistance Officer After Action Report.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Fill out Casualty Assistance Referral Card.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Obtain multiple copies of Authorization for Disclosure of Information.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Obtain a copy of Disposition of Remains Statement (DA Form 7302).	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Obtain a copy of Verification of Survivor Annuity (DD Form 2656-7).	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Obtain a copy of Direct Deposit Authorization (DFAS-CL Form 7330/2).	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Obtain a copy of Tax Withholding Certificate (W-4P).	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Obtain copy of SF1199A Direct Deposit Sign-Up Form	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Obtain copies of Duty Log Journal DD Form 1594	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Obtain AER Release Form	<input type="checkbox"/>

INITIAL CONTACT AND MEETING

1. Telephone the PNOK within four hours (between 0600 hours to 2200 hours) of the notification to schedule visit.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Uniform for initial visit is Class A. Upon arrival, express condolences.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Visit should be brief to complete following actions:	
▪ Confirm 45-day mailing and residence address (if different).	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Obtain Soldier's common name and check on any special titles used by the NOK.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Confirm DD Form 93 information	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Present the NOK with Casualty Assistance Referral Card.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Determine immediate needs (emergency relief)	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Advise on status of remains and viewability	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Discuss and explain death gratuity entitlement, if appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Explain Death Gratuity payment options, if the NOK is ready. (Provide Direct Deposit Sign-Up Form, SF 1199A, if appropriate.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Instruct NOK not to make funeral arrangements yet.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Discuss posthumous citizenship, if relevant.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Explain "Authorization for Disclosure of Information" form (usually not given on first visit)	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Explain AER Release Form.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Determine Family need for PAO support. (Note: In a high-profile case, it may be desirable to have the PAO accompany the CAO on the initial visit. This can be discussed when making the appointment.)	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Record completed actions on Casualty Assistance Officer After Action Report and Daily Staff Journal/ Duty Officer's Log (DA Form 1594).	<input type="checkbox"/>

FOLLOW-UP VISITS

1. Advise Family on identification and viewability of the remains.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Complete the forms for the Death Gratuity payment and deliver the check, if required.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. If applicable, fill out forms for disassociated remains.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Explain the travel benefits for Family funeral travel to the NOK.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Brief the PADD on DA Form 7302 and request disposition instructions when instructed by CAC.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Escort PADD to funeral home to discuss requirements for cemetery (contact CMAOC for Arlington National Cemetery requests)	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Planning and preparing for the funeral	
▪ Plan for requisite number of flag cases	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Plan and procure lapel pins and lapel buttons/ present to Family members	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Coordinate with the escort	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Reimbursements for incidental burial expenses.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Coordinate with Family regarding presence of military honors, flag presentation, objection to General Officer attendance.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Coordinate with NCOIC of Military Funeral Honors (MFH)—communicate Family's requests; discuss CAO participation in flag presentation, if requested.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Coordinate with General Officer's office/brief General Officer.	<input type="checkbox"/>

THE FUNERAL AND INTERMENT SERVICE

1. Accompany Family to airport for arrival of Soldier's remains.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Oversee Planeside Honors.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. View and inspect Soldier's remains with escort and funeral director before Family views them.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Check casket, uniform, awards, medals.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Accompany Family to the funeral home for viewing of remains.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Award lapel pins and buttons, if this has not yet been done.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Attend funeral as representative of the Secretary of the Army when no general officer will attend; present flag if required.	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Monitor performance of MFH team and provide feedback to MFH and CAC. Relay feedback from Family, as appropriate.	<input type="checkbox"/>

POST FUNERAL ASSISTANCE

1. Contact the PNOK two days after the funeral to schedule a visit.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Discuss payment of funeral/internment expenses—complete DD Form 1375.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Schedule meeting with Legal Assistance office—accompany the NOK.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Assist the NOK to gather key documents/make certified copies.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Provide the NOK with copies of the Report of Casualty (DD Form 1300)	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Determine need for immediate assistance, i.e. Army Emergency Relief	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Escort NOK to VA briefing for explanation of benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Complete SBP worksheet and counseling checklist, submit to RSO.	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. When RSO is ready, accompany NOK to Survivor Benefit Plan (SBP) Counseling Briefing.	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Provide CAC with completed SBP paperwork.	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. Present information on other benefits and entitlements/assist the NOK to file for benefits:	
▪ Servicemember's Group Life Insurance (SGLI)	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Traumatic Servicemember's Group Life Insurance (TSGLI)	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) and Savings Deposit Program (SDP) Claims	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Unpaid Pay and Allowances	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ TRICARE/TRICARE Dental	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Social Security Benefits	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. Assist NOK to procure new ID Card.	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. Ensure that the PERE receives all of the Soldier's personal effects.	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. If applicable, assist in coordination for the Fatal Training/Operational Accident briefing	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. If PNOK desires, assist in preparing requests for official reports: Line of Duty Investigation, Autopsy Reports; CID Reports, Safety Reports.	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. Close out the case:	
▪ Complete Interim After Action Report—forward to CAC no later than 60 days after case assignment and every 30 days thereafter.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ 120 days after assignment, complete AAR and submit to CAC.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Provide the NOK with contact information.	<input type="checkbox"/>
▪ Complete and submit Final After Action Report.	<input type="checkbox"/>

FATAL TRAINING/OPERATIONAL ACCIDENT PRESENTATIONS TO NOK

1. Review AR 600-34 for a full explanation of the program.	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Present formal offer of presentation to the PNOK. Ensure that the PNOK chooses one of four options and signs the offer.	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Fax the signed offer back to CMAOC.	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Prepare a "PNOK report" with information about the Family.	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Coordinate Family participation at the briefing, including attendance by clergy.	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Attend the rehearsal presentation with the briefer and Department of the Army representative, if applicable.	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Attend the presentation as liaison between the Army and Family. Uniform is Class A.	<input type="checkbox"/>

Appendix B: List of Key Forms

CJMAB Form 1	Disposition of Remains Election Statement - Initial Notification of Identified Partial Remains
CJMAB Form 3	Disposition of Remains Election Statement – Notification of Subsequent Identified Partial Remains (Without Group Remains)
CJMAB Form 4	Election for Air Transportation of Remains from a Theater of Combat Operations
CSF Form FE-6	Claim for Death Benefits (Federal Employee's Group Life Insurance)
DA Form 1594	Daily Staff Journal or Duty Officer Log
DA Form 2386	Agreement for Interment
DA Form 4475-R	Data Required by the Privacy Act of 1974 - Personal Information from the NOK of a Deceased Service Member
DA Form 7302	Disposition of Remains Statement
DD Form 1172	Application for Uniformed Services Identification DEERS Enrollment Card
DD Form 1300	Report of Casualty
DD Form 1351-2	Travel Voucher or Subvoucher
DD Form 1375	Request for Payment of Funeral and/or Interment Expenses
DD Form 1701	Inventory of Household Goods
DD Form 2656-7	Verification for Annuity
DD Form 397	Claim Certification and Voucher for Death Gratuity Payment
DD Form 7302	Disposition of Remains Statement
DD Form 93	Record of Emergency Data
Form N-644	Application for Posthumous Citizenship
SF 1174	Claim for Unpaid Compensation of Deceased Member of the Uniformed Services
SF 1199a	Direct Deposit Sign-Up Form
SF 180	Request Pertaining to Military Records
SF 2800	Application for Death Benefits – Civil Service Retirement System
SGLV-8283A	Claim for Death Benefits
SSA-24	Application for Survivors Benefits
TSP-U-17	Information Relating to Deceased Participant
VA Form 21-4138	Statement in Support of Claim
VA Form 21-4142	Authorization and Consent to Release Information to the Department of Veterans Affairs
VA Form 21-534a	Application for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation by a Surviving Spouse or Child – In Service Death Only
VA Form 21-535 and SSA 24	Application for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation by Parent(s) (Including Accrued Benefits and Death Compensation when Applicable) and SSA 24 – Application for Survivors Benefits
VA Form 22-5490	Application for Survivors' and Dependents' Educational Assistance
VA Form 26-1817	Request for Determination of Loan Guaranty Eligibility – Unmarried Surviving Spouses
VA Form 29-4125	Claim for One Sum Payment
VA Form 29-4125A	Claim for Monthly Payments, National Service Life Insurance

Appendix C:

Directory of Telephone Numbers – Casualty Assistance

Casualty and Mortuary Affairs Operations Center (CMAOC)

Casualty Operations 24-hour Hotline	800-626-3317
Long Term Family Case Management	866-272-5841

Armed Forces Services Corporation

Customer Service	800-336-4538; 703-522-3060
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Armed Forces Medical Examiners

Armed Forces Medical Examiners	301-319-0000
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Defense Finance Accounting System (DFAS)

DFAS-Indianapolis Arrears of Pay	317-510-0237
Death Travel Claims	317-510-4258
DFAS-Cleveland Customer Service	888-322-7411
DFAS Casualty	800-269-5170

Gold Star Wives of America

Gold Star Wives Organization	888-479-9788
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TRICARE

TRICARE For Life Information	866-773-0404
TRICARE Family Member Dental Plan (TFMDP)	800-866-8499
TRICARE Senior Pharmacy	877-363-6337
Delta Dental - Retiree Dental Plan	888-838-8737

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, INC. (TAPS)

Tragedy Assistance Program for Survivors, INC. (TAPS)	800-959-8277
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Department of Veterans Affairs (DVA)

Information on VA Benefits	800-827-1000
State VA Commissioner	Check Local Listing
State VA Regional Office	Check Local Listing
Life Insurance	800-669-8477
Education Benefits	800-442-4551
State VA Medical Centers	Check Local Listing
Office of Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance	800-419-1473

DEERS

DEERS Updates, Defense Manpower Data Center	800-538-9552
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Social Security Administration

Social Security	866-777-7887
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Index

A

- After Action Reports 46
- After the Notification 15
- Air Transport of Remains 32
- Armed Forces Services Corporation 36
- Army Emergency Relief 36
- Authorization for Disclosure of Information Form 26
- Autopsy Report 46

B

- Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) 41
- Beneficiaries
 - order of precedence for Death Gratuity payment 24
- Beneficiary Financial Counseling Services (BFCS) 39
- Bereavement Counseling 37

C

- CAO Duty
 - length of 19
 - phases 19
 - preparing for 19
 - role in military funeral honors 33
- CAO Mission 17
- CAO Packet of Forms 21
- CAO Qualifications 17
 - exceptions 17
- CAO Resources 20
- Casualty Assistance Center 8
- Casualty Report 12
- Casualty Reporting 9
- Central Joint Mortuary Affairs Board (CJMAB) 28
- CJMAB Forms One, Three 28
- Closing Out the Case, CAO 46
- CNO Duty
 - pre-notification briefing 12
 - preparation 11
- CNO Qualifications 10
- Criminal Investigation Division (CID) Report 46

D

- Daily Staff Journal (DA Form 1594) 21
- DD Form 93 11
 - “Do Not Notify Due to Ill Health” 11
- Death Gratuity Payment 24
 - order of precedence for beneficiaries 24
 - payment options 24, 25
- Department of Veterans Affairs Benefits 36
- Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) 37
- Disassociated Remains 28
- Disposition Instructions 29
- Disposition of Remains (From Theater) 27
- Disposition of Remains Statement, DA Form 7302 29
- Documents to Collect 36
- DUSTWUN Cases, Casualty Assistance 54

E

- Eligibility to Receive CAO Assistance 18
- Escorting of Remains 31
- Escorts
 - special 31
 - unit 31
- Exceptions to CAO Qualifications 17

F

- Family relationships
 - complexity of 22
- Family resources 20
- Family SGLI 39
- Fatal Training/Operational Accident Brief 43
- First Visit, CAO Duty 23
 - how to conduct 23
- Flag Cases 30
- Funeral
 - CAO duties 34
 - presence of General Officer 33
- Funeral/Interment Expenses, DD Form 1375 35

G

General Officers
 presence at funeral 33
Getting the Call, CAO duty 20
Gold Star Lapel Pin 33
Grief and Bereavement Process 48
 long-term grieving 51
 traumatic grief, warning signs 52
Grief Reactions 14
 responding to 48
Grief Reactions to the Notification 48

H

Housing
 basic allowance for 41

I

ID Cards 42
Identification and Viewability of the Remains 27
Initial Phone Call, CAO Duty 22

J

Joint Personal Effects Depot (JPED) 42

L

Lapel Buttons 33
 Gold Star 33
Legal Assistance 35
Line of Duty Report of Investigation 46

M

Media
 if present at CAO visit 23
 presence at notification 12
Military Funeral Honors
 CAO role 33
Missing Cases, Casualty Assistance 56

N

Notification
 grief reactions to 48
Notification Team 10
Notification Visit 13
 delivering the notification 13
 gathering information 14
 post-notification duties 16
 responding to questions 14
 when to leave 15

O

Official Reports, requesting 46

P

Personal Effects
 receiving 42
Person Authorized to Direct Disposition
 (PADD) 26
Person Eligible to Receive Effects (PERE) 42
Phases of CAO Duty 19
Post-Notification Duties 16
Posthumous Citizenship 25
Pre-Notification Briefing 12
Preparing for CAO Duty 19
Primary Next of Kin (PNOK)
 defined 11
 order of precedence 10

R

Record of Notification Actions Form 12
Referral Card, Casualty Assistance 22
Reimbursement for Travel
 Travel voucher, DD Form 1351-2 32
Remains Handling Process 27
 air transport 32
 escorting of remains 31
Remains of Soldier
 disposition instructions 29
 identification of 27
 preparation and arrangement for shipping 27
 viewability of 28

S

Safety Investigation Report 46
Savings Deposit Program (SDP) Claims 39
Secondary Next of Kin
 defined 10
Self-Care for the CNO 15
Self Care for CAO 47
Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance (SGLI)
 38
SGLV 8286 12
Social Security Benefits 41
Special Escort 31
Status of Remains 25
 answering NOK questions about 25
Survivor's Benefit Plan 37

T

Thrift Savings Plan (TSP) Claims 39

Traumatic Grief and Depression 52

Traumatic Servicemembers' Group Life Insurance 39

Travel

Family funeral 32

reimbursement for 32

TRICARE 41

Types of CAOs 18

U

Unit Escort 31

Unit Memorial Services 32

Unpaid Pay and Allowances 40

V

Veterans Affairs (VA) 36

